Hello CDL families! We are well into our spring semester with our practicum students and I must say we have had a great first round of lead teaching from the first group! I am really looking forward to the next round. The practicum students are completing 4 weeks each of lead teaching in a collaborative environment of two interns being paired together (a morning student paired with an afternoon student).

The spring semester is always a very busy time at the CDL as we are gearing up for many events. As a reminder, we have our Parent Advisory Board meetings set for March 8 and April 19. Please let me know if you are interested in attending—all are welcome! Also, we are planning for the Week of the Young Child (WOYC), during April 10-16. The practicum students will be hosting their Family Night as well in April during WOYC. More information to follow regarding these exciting events.

Since the fall 2014 semester, the CDL has been participating in an innovative and progressive staff development training in the areas of health and safety. Each semester the CDL collaborates with the Nursing department to provide crisis-response simulation experiences. These pioneering simulation experiences place students in life-like emergency scenarios (i.e., choking baby, baby not breathing, staff member or parent getting hurt in classroom or loosing consciousness) facilitated by the Nursing Simulation Coordinator. Following the experience, there is a debriefing session with discussion.

The CDL completed their simulation night a couple weeks ago. Students stated during the debriefing the importance of remaining calm; how critical it is to work together; to make sure the other children in the room are safe; don’t be afraid to ask for help; and, to be mindful of each person in the room and what needs to be done in the moment. Students testify that even though they know the situations are not real, the feelings and emotions that arise during the simulated crises are real. This staff development training is truly unique to the CDL and provides an invaluable experience the students will get nowhere else.

I hope everyone enjoys a little bit of R & R during the upcoming Spring Break! Thank you and have a wonderful month!

Lisa Schmidt
Happy March Preschool Families!

February was a really busy month. The children used reusable materials to create things such as fire engines, rocket ships, robots and treasure boxes. If you would like to donate any recyclables, the children would love it. They have been using boxes, paper towel rolls and many other materials.

The preschool room welcomed Dr. Laurie Zittel, professor in Kinesiology and Physical Education, to do a demonstration of physical development skills. The children were able to learn the critical elements in performing these skills with Ms. Laurie and Mr. Jake. The children were challenged to demonstrate a variety of locomotor skills such as: jumping, hopping, running, galloping, leaping, and sliding. Mr. Jake and Ms. Laurie also had the children demonstrate object control skills such as: catching, bouncing, kicking, throwing over and underhand. We look forward to incorporating this information into our curriculum with games and big body play experiences in the classroom and playground!

As March approaches, we would like to introduce our practicum students Jorden and Kelly as they will be starting their lead teaching.

Sincerely,
Jamie, Kristi, Macy, and Elena

Reminders:
Please remember to sign your child in and out.

Since the weather is very unpredictable. Please make sure your child has a coat, gloves, hat, and boots. We will still be going outside.
Happy March ITT East Families!

Our ITT East classroom has been a busy room in planning for our curriculum. The weather was a little challenging the past month. On days when it has been too cold to go outside, we have found creative ways to keep the children engaged with gross motor. For starters, we have taken indoor walks and explored various hallways of Gable and Graham Halls. Along with that, we have utilized the various gross motor materials in the classroom to get our wiggles out, such as the activity mats, tunnels, and climber. Children have found a great interest in the laundry-themed dramatic play area! We have noticed the children washing and drying the baby doll clothes and ironing them. The children have also used the laundry baskets to carry the clothes around the classroom. The children are really exploring role play. The teachers in the room are, in turn, facilitating this role play through extending and enhancing their play experiences through intentionality in emergent curriculum development, supported by their observations of the children’s cues.

Thank you to our first round of lead teachers Shawna and Alyssa. We had so much fun making our scrapbook pages, the children were able to enhance their creativity and imagination, fine motor, and social/emotional developments during this fun Parent Community Involvement. Thank you to ALL the families who joined us during our classroom event of scrapbooking. Shawna will be introducing the scrapbook during a future group time!

We also would like to welcome our second lead teachers ShaVonne and Christina. They will be teaching for the next four weeks. We are really excited to see their innovative and exciting activities. Please stop by to join us during our activities!

Please make sure that your child still has plenty of warm clothing for outside play; including snow pants, boots, water-proof gloves and hats. Only if the temperature is below 15 degrees with the wind chill, or it is raining, will we stay inside. There are no other weather-related restrictions for the children to be outside at this time of year. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Clarissa, Jessica, Natalalee, & Krysten
Greetings ITT West Families!

As February comes to an end, let’s hope the warmer weather is coming our way in March! During the frigidly cold days this month, the teachers have been providing a variety of indoor gross motor activities for the children such as going on indoor walks, using the climber, using the trampoline, and much more! On days it was warm enough to go outside, the children sat in sleds, and the teachers, interns, and older two-year-olds alike, were able to pull the children around in the snow on our playground!

The ITT West classroom welcomed a visitor from the youth dance studio in DeKalb, “Just for Kix”. The dancer came into our classroom to show the children her ballet shoes, how to stretch, and three dance routines! The children were able to explore and build on their imagination, creativity, and gross motor skills during this fun parent–community involvement! We give big round of applause to Elizabeth and Hannah for providing the children with fun group times and developmentally focused activities during their roles as lead teachers!

Our next set of lead teachers are Cherish (morning intern) and Sam (afternoon intern)! They will be taking over the week of March 7th! We wish them both the very best of luck, and can’t wait to see what exciting activities they have planned for our classroom!

A few reminders:

- Please remember to take children’s artwork home. It is located in their artwork folder! Some children’s folders are really piling up!

- Also, sometimes the weather we get in the month of March can be unpredictable. We ask that the children have warm outdoor clothing for the days we are still able to go outside; including snow pants, snow boots, winter coats, waterproof gloves, and hats. Having an extra change of clothes is ideal as well! Unless the temperature is below 15 degrees with the wind chill, or it is raining, we will be going outside. There are no other weather-related restrictions for outdoor play at this time of the year.

Sincerely,
Ecila, Casey, Brittney, and Katie
KINDERGARTEN READINESS—Is My Child Ready For Kindergarten?

As we approach the end of our spring semester, we are excited that a handful of our preschoolers will be moving on to kindergarten in the fall semester. This can be a little bit of an uncertain time for parents as they gear up for this transition and learn how to navigate through the school system. The Q&A below is from the National Association for the Education for Young Children’s website for families. The Q&A contains many experiences that relate to your child’s social and emotional development. Expecting your child to write their name, count to 100, or name 10 colors is not on this list. Children really need to know how to function in a community to allow for future learning to happen.

Q: I have a child in preschool. How do I know if he will be ready for kindergarten when the time comes?

A: As a parent, you know your child better than anyone else. Pay attention to the things he says and does. Children come to kindergarten from a wide variety of experiences, and settings, so expecting them all to know and be able to do the same things is unrealistic.

Is your son excited about school? That’s a good sign. Beyond that, it would be great for him to have some experience with the following things:

- listening to others and taking appropriate turns for expressing ideas and questions;
- handing materials respectfully and putting them away;
- sustaining engagement with an activity or process;
- identifying and pursuing his own interests, choosing materials and having some ideas about how to engage with them productively;
- being safe in relation to the group (staying within school bounds) and attending to personal needs (washing hands); and
- asking for help when he needs it.

He may have begun to develop other habits and skills but they may not be fully developed in preschool or even by the end of kindergarten: solving problems with peers, taking the perspective of others, increasing his stamina, and building academic mastery, for example. Hopefully, on the first day of school, your child will enter kindergarten with joy and the confidence that school is a good place to be—a fun, fair, and good place to learn.

By Ben Mardell and Melissa Tonachel