Welcome New Families
Several new families have joined the Center in the past 6 weeks. New families—please know that you are welcome. We hope that you will meet some of the Center families as you arrive and depart. I know our returning families will welcome you!

Nature Classroom
The family workday was a big success. Many thanks to the parents who helped install part of the classroom.
The children are playing every day with activities at the nature art table. Children of every age child have a blast performing on the outdoor stage. The planter boxes in front are ready for planting. We hope to have a crop of fall lettuce and radishes.

The next steps toward completion are:
- Installing the Akambira (this is partially completed)
- Having Mulhall’s install the beds of plants that will define the areas and the flooring for the block-building area.
- Moving the sprinkler heads
- Path for riding toys completed

We hope to have all of this work completed this fall.

Accreditation
We continue to work on administrative details of re-accrediting the Center. I revised the Parent Handbook and the Staff Handbook. Katie revised the Student Employee Handbook. Both of us are working on the Administrative Portfolios.

Teachers are working on their Classroom Portfolios which will be viewed by the assessor as evidence that certain criteria are met.

Upcoming Events
Curriculum Meetings
The teachers of each room will hold curriculum meetings on the dates listed on the right. Please plan to attend the meeting for your child’s room.

When you attend this meeting you will
• Meet other parents,
• Learn more about the opportunities your child has in the Center program, and
• Hear the enthusiasm that your child’s teachers feel for their work!

All Curriculum Meetings will be held in the Center Kitchen.

Picnic
The Center and the Parent Council invite your family to a picnic at Cooper Farm Pavilion on Friday, September 26. This is a great way to meet other families and your child’s friends. Many teachers attend this picnic as well.

The fee for using the Pavilion is paid through funds from the 2007 Holiday Bazaar. Families may order food from Blimpie’s (we will send everyone an order form in early September), or you may bring your own food. Blimpie’s will deliver meals to the Farm.

More information will follow. We hope to have a great turnout!

Parent Council Meeting
The first Parent Council meeting had a great turnout with over twenty parents in attendance! The meetings will now take place in the Center kitchen from 4:30 to 5:30 PM. September’s meeting is coming up so be sure to attend!

Connie
Infant Room News

Where has our summer gone? We had a busy and fun summer. Soon we will be welcoming new and returning student employees. It is always fun to hear the adventures the students had over their break.

The infants sure enjoy outside play—even more now that some of the outdoor classroom is taking shape. The stage is a big hit as they like to perform, dance and sing. I think they are the future drama and dance team of Creighton. Another area they have been exploring is the hill. The older children have learned how to climb the hill, either by hanging onto the fence or positioning their body to go up hill without falling backwards. It has also been a learning experience on how to get back down the hill. It has been so fun watching them maneuver up and down the hill. It is so exciting watching the transition from a play area to an outdoor classroom. Morning outdoor playtime is special too as we are able to see all of our toddler friends at the same time.

The younger infants have many new achievements to share. Jackie is a walker now and Ryan is taking many steps. Hope loves to stand by the little toy sink and play. Will and Claire crawl or cruise around the room on their feet while holding onto furniture. Caden enjoys sitting on the floor and playing with toys. Connor and Shiv enjoy playing in the Bumbo as they can sit and play with toys.

Music and story time play such a big part of our day and are enjoyed by all. The older infants will go to the cabinet where the books are stored and ask for a story. Will and Ryan will point or look up at the books when they are ready for a story. I'm not sure who enjoys the stories more, the teachers or the children.

We have welcomed several new infants to our room: Connor McNally, son of Clancy and Stuart McNally; Shiv Jamnadas, son of Rooshabh and Bina Patel; Demianna Abou Seif, daughter of Mohsen Abou Seif and Mary Tadros; and Raelyn Barton, daughter of D. J. Barton and Mary Roy. Noah Winegard has moved to the toddler room.

Shanna, Lynn, Gina

From “Early Years” Journal, Resources for Educators

Parent to Parent:

My daughter Amy always seemed to be “bouncing off the walls”—at home, at school, just about everywhere. I didn’t know what to do.

My sister’s son is also very active, so I asked her for some advice. She suggested that Amy get as much exercise as possible. So, we try to go for a walk or play in the park almost every day. On other days, Amy rides her bike or plays running games with the other kids on our block.

I’ve noticed that Amy is especially energetic when she’s overtired, so I make sure she gets at least eight hours of sleep. The difference these changes have made to her behavior is wonderful—and I am calmer too!
The summer months have been so enjoyable for the children in the toddler room. The children totally love being outdoors and once the rains ceased this summer, we were outside as much as possible.

The sandbox is the children’s favorite sensory activity. We have been in the sand area twice a week and the children never tire of it. They develop their fine motor skills by using the shovels to scoop up the sand and fill buckets. Since the children are barefooted in the sand, they have the sensation of feeling the sand all around their feet and between their toes. Walking on the uneven sand surfaces allows them to practice balancing skills.

Often the children work with another child or a small group and a teacher, building sandcastles and roads for their trucks. This is a great opportunity to learn cooperation with other children. Teachers help children talk to each other as they work, building vocabulary and helping each child to talk about his/her work. Working in groups also helps a child sustain interest in the project and helps to lengthen his/her attention span. The children experiment with using different sand tools. And always, sand is a great lesson in cause and effect, if you step on the sandcastle it falls down.

Visits from Ms. Nancy, the OPL Children’s Librarian, and activities in the room have promoted literacy skills. On one occasion Ms Nancy took the toddlers on an imaginary trip through the zoo. She reads stories that are new to the children and has taught them several new songs. The children have learned to trust this new adult in their classroom.

Our own literacy efforts include engaging children in pretend play by acting out a book. We help them become aware of what the pictures are saying as well as foster in them an awareness of print by pointing to the words in the book. Sometimes we will use a book’s illustrations to inspire the children’s artwork. We also have cooking or tasting activities that relate to a story we are reading. Recently, we had strawberries to taste during the week that we read the book “The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear”.

In the middle of July the workers came to continue work on our Nature Playground, so we sought new avenues to encourage physical development and gross motor skills. We have walked to the baseball and softball fields and toured the Kitty Vaughn building. There the children were able to walk out on to the deck to get a bird’s eye view of the fields.

During the last week of July the theme was “All Wet”. Swimsuits and swim shoes were welcome attire and everyone headed for the parking lot (blocked off from traffic) for a car wash and lots of cool water. Several days we placed a sprinkler on the lots and the children ran through it. Our sensory table provided another water venue for those who did not want to run through the sprinkler. The first day the children warmed up slowly to the sprinkler. The second time, they were all over it as soon as the water came on. We worked on the personal care skills as children needed to undress themselves, get on swimsuits and then change back into their school clothes when we finished.

We have had water activities on the playground as well with the children using spray bottles (filled with water) and “painting” with water on the sidewalks and retaining walls.

The teachers continue to plan activities that help each child work on social and emotional skills, physical development, cognitive development and language development but, the best part is – The toddlers just think that they’re having fun! We bet you did too!

Laura, DuRell, and Erin
Preschool Room News

The preschoolers have had fun this summer! At times it has been quite wet but, the children have managed to use squirt bottles, paint brushes and water buckets outdoors. They have gone on field trips and have enjoyed a variety of games and outdoor activities. The children loved seeing the dinosaur exhibit at The Children’s Museum. The trip inspired a week of discussion and learning about dinosaurs. Even our youngest preschoolers were interested in learning the prehistoric creatures name’s and the type of food they once ate. They played with dinosaurs and dug for plastic dinosaurs in the sand. This trip was followed by a visit to the Durham Western Heritage Museum. At the museum they saw the Amazon exhibit and walked through the trains which they thoroughly enjoyed. The trip to Gifford Farm was a great learning experience! The children loved being outdoors and had fun role playing their farm experiences at school. Both groups made a farm mural, and did some creative art work and enjoyed farm related songs and finger plays.

The last few weeks have been spent playing in the sand and observing insects. We have been reading the colorful books by Denise Fleming. We read In the Tall, Tail Grass. In the Small, Small Pond and Beetle Bop. We made a group mural depicting the small pond, a day time mural of the tall grass and a night time mural of the tall grass. We have introduced vocabulary words such as nocturnal, night vision, hibernation and cold and warm blooded animals. The children like using the bug catchers. They have tried to catch beetles and other insects they have seen in Denise Fleming’s books. We plan to encourage the four year olds to begin science journals which will be used outdoors in the nature classroom. These science journals will tie in with the concepts introduced in Denise Fleming’s books. We had a great field trip to Joslyn Art Museum. An exhibit featuring the art work used in Denise Fleming’s books and a video explaining how her art work is on display until the end of August. The children have expressed interest in these books. We will continue to use Fleming’s books in teaching art techniques and other concepts.

One child who is particularly fond of bugs asked me to help him to make a list of different types of beetles. This child will most likely enjoy making a science journal in the coming weeks. We hope to develop individual areas of interest and provide learning activities related to these areas both indoors and out. With the month of September approaching these concepts and ideas will be carried over to activities done in the Literacy Room. We have reorganized our groups and are working consistently with our groups each day.

The preschoolers have enjoyed sand and water play when the weather was nice. Our water play activities included the children filling buckets with water and were given paintbrushes. They painted the garage, landscape, sidewalk, bricks, and fence with water. Sometimes they even painted your feet if you stood too close. J We also use spray bottles along with the water table which we filled with a variety of animals, water wheels, balls, and boats. On our sand play days, the children always enjoy covering their feet in the sand, scooping and dumping and building their own sand castles or just using their imaginations to be creative in the sand.

It’s wonderful to see so many parents building on what is being taught at school. A couple of children have mentioned they will be watching The Olympic Games on television. During our group time we will spend time talking about the games we have watched on television. Another child mentioned visiting a museum while on vacation. This child was anxious to tell us about insect fossils she had seen. A few children have tried to do art at home that resembled art work from the books we have read.

The other day two boys from Delois and Pat’s group found a scrap of paper resembling a shoe. As the day progressed, these two creative boys worked together whenever they had a chance. By the end of the day they had made a large robotic like person. It is hanging in the hall for everyone to see. It is so nice to see children being so creative and using such good team work.

Several new preschoolers have joined our preschool classes. We have enjoyed getting to know these children. We really appreciate it when our older students attempt to set a good example for the younger ones who have joined us. Many of the older students have shown good friendship and have practiced teamwork to make our new friends feel welcome at school. We are anxious to see our new friends grow and learn and we hope they have a great preschool experience!

We have said goodbye to the following preschool friends who entered Kindergarten or other centers: James Borosko, Jonathan King, Lindsey Koster, Estelle McLaughlin, Taylor Miner, Mia Sharrar, Harrison Smith, Olivia Soukup, Emily Thinnes, Chloe Whidden and Taylor Miner. Catie Nosacka heads off to school at the end of August. New to the preschool room are Aiden & Ethan NewMyer, Zach Hatcher, D.J. Williams, and Serena Zhu.

Shari, Delois, Pat and Keon

From Ms. Delois:
A special “Thank You” to Creighton University James R. Russell Child Development Center, Director, Staff, Parents and Children. There are so many things to thank you for, I don’t know where to start, so I’ll just say you’re really special. Thank you for your prayers, phone calls, cards and words of encouragement. To the children, thank you for all those beautiful pictures and cards and thanks with all my heart! I still have a little ways to go but I am glad to be back at work.