Dear Parent,

It is hard to believe that much of January is already past. The children settled back into their school routine after the holiday break. The teachers are bringing in a few new experiences for the children and reviving some that the children loved, such as the Bear Hunt in toddlers.

If you noticed a few new families in the Center, it is because several new children entered the toddler room this month. Look for their names in the February newsletter. The Center is pleasantly full at the present and I do not anticipate openings in either the preschool room or the toddler room until summer.

We will soon add new educational equipment to the classrooms with funds from the Chili Luncheon and Silent Auction. The teachers are starting “wish lists” for their rooms. We identified a possible addition for the playground that is age-appropriate for all of the children. Once we develop a plan, I will make it available to parents.

Connie

Tips for Parents

Here are some tips to avoid the muscle strain that can happen in parenting.  
Alternate the side on which you carry your child.  
Try not to carry your child in an infant car seat.  
Tension makes an injury more likely. If your child is upset, kneel at your child’s level and talk before lifting him/her.

Value of Pre-kindergarten programs

With the increased interest in early childhood education nationally and locally (there is a bill in the Nebraska Unicameral calling for universal programs for four year old children) it is well to remember the benefits derived from a quality early childhood program. Results from the Perry Preschool Project, a longitudinal study that is over 35 years old often are referenced. The study follows 123 children from ages 3 and 4 through early adulthood. Subsequent studies bear similar results.

The studies show that children had improvement (when compared to the control group) in the areas of math, reading social studies, and science as well as improved social behavior, morality, and interpersonal communication skills. The research shows that these improvements seldom faded. Other studies concluded that the benefits of early childhood education faded over time, however, these studies only measured IQ. As Steve Barnett, director of the National Institute of Early Education Research at Rutgers University observed, the areas that showed lasting improvement are most important to parents and teachers.

The emphasis in the Perry study is the influence of a quality early education program. Quality includes many factors, well-trained teachers, low teacher-child ratios, parental involvement, and a curriculum based on child development. Many early childhood educators feel that play must be a vital part of the program and that play is endangered in the name of preparing children for kindergarten.

According to Vivian Paley, teacher and author, “...play is mankind’s oldest and best-used learning tool.” Another teacher describes play as the opportunity for the child “...to solidify their scripts of life.”

Our goal at the Center is to give the children the foundational skills to serve them well into kindergarten and beyond.