Hello CDL families! We have been off to a great start this spring semester. The new practicum students have really jumped into their roles and have been busy learning the routines and practices at the CDL. Prior to the semester beginning, the students were here for a 2-day orientation. During this time, the students were able to connect in the classroom with learning the safety, supervision, health, and mealtime protocols; as well as, getting to know many of the children, staff, and parents.

On Friday, January 13 the CDL hosted a Family Open House in the morning. This was an excellent time for getting acquainted with your child’s primary and for your child to get re-acquainted with the classroom. Parents had the opportunity to experience a little slice of the daily schedule and routine and watch in the classroom how their child interacts with others. We had a good turnout and I thank everyone who was able to attend. It was a joy to see everyone.

The CDL is hosting their first spring CDL Parent Advisory Board on February 7 at 3:00 p.m. in Wirtz Hall 113. This is a great opportunity for you to be part of the discussion surrounding a variety of topics that impact the center and the classrooms. An email was sent out and we hope that many can be a part of this important group!

As a reminder, all families will receive a copy of their child’s Ages & Stages Questionnaire and informational letter in their parent pocket during the week of February 6. Your child’s primary caregiver will be completing this screen tool as well; and around week 7-8, you should receive a results letter from your child’s primary. If there are any concerns resulting from the screen and a referral is needed, the primary caregiver and one of the classroom teachers will be following up with you as well. While you completing the ASQ at home is not required, we do appreciate and welcome parents to complete this and turn back in to their child’s primary for scoring.

I would like to update families on the status of the hiring search for a new Child Development Supervisor for ITT West. Human Resources was able to post the position January 30th, and we currently are in the process of setting up interviews. Updates will be available as soon as possible.

Finally, for some parents, kindergarten is coming just around the corner! Kristi Hayward, Preschool Master Teacher, and I just attended a community conversation facilitated by the DeKalb County Community Foundation (DCCF) regarding, what is ‘Kindergarten Readiness’? There were representatives from local child cares and all local school districts—including several kindergarten teachers. The CDL Preschool teachers, Kristi and Jamie, will be hosting a Kindergarten Readiness workshop for our families, and will be able to provide some good feedback from this important meeting. More information to come!

Have a fantastic month!
Lisa Schmidt
Co-Director for Operations
Greetings Families!

We are very excited to welcome you all back as well as our new interns. Jackelene, Jasmine, and Erin. We are also beyond excited to welcome our previous intern, Frank. Frank joins us as extra help and is now working the morning shift. We are looking forward to a fabulous semester. This semester we will be planning for you a Kindergarten Readiness workshop and will be participating again in the Week of the Young Child (WOYC) celebration. Stay tuned for more information on those exciting events.

In the classroom, we have been interested in various types of animals. The children have been learning about various ocean animals as well as different types of cats. The classroom has also been working on various STEM topics such as building various structures and mixing ingredients to see what it turns into. One of the structures that the children made were bridges. The children used popsicle sticks and small blocks to create their structure. After they built their bridge the children wanted to see how many blocks would stack on top so we made guesses and then tested it.

Sincerely,
Kristi, Jamie, Sam, & Kat
Happy February ITT East Families!

After the New Year, we have gotten back into the swing of things and are excited to be able to welcome some new families to our classroom and the center in February. We also like to welcome our first lead teachers Cayla and Demone; they will be teaching for the next four weeks. We are really excited to see their fun and innovative activities. Please stop by to join us during their fun activities!

Unfortunately, we have not been able to utilize our playground due to the large amount of mud. Instead we have taken advantage of nature walks, explorations and gross motor time on campus. Many of the children have been engaged in community and campus vehicles, that drive past our building. They especially are excited about the pick up trucks, garbage trucks, snow plows and Bobcats. The teachers have incorporated vehicles during story time, dance parties as well as art activities. Another “Big Hit” in our classroom is our media table which has water scoops, icebergs, and artic animals.

While staying indoors, we have gotten to take many walks down the hallway to play on the ramp and explore NIU a little more. In addition, we have been using gross motor equipment (rainbow mat, the climber, balls, bikes and the tunnels) and dancing in the classroom to get our wiggles out when we can’t go outside. The children have all taken a large interest in construction work by utilizing tools, hard hats, and foam blocks to build fun structures and towers. The children have also been interested in sensory activities such as, Mr. Bubbles foam with gears and paint.

Although outside time as been somewhat limited, we ask that the children still have plenty of warm clothing for the days we can go outside; including snow pants, boots, gloves and hats. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Clarissa, Christy P., Natalalee, & Elena
West Families,

Let’s start by thanking everyone who attended the Open House at the beginning of the semester! We would also like to welcome Tena and Leigha. Tena is a student worker this semester and Leigha jumped on the CDL bandwagon after completing her practicum last semester. We were very happy to add both of these ladies to West team! We’re especially excited about the addition of our youngest member, Liam! Liam is the younger brother of Caden, a West graduate who transitioned to Preschool last summer.

The students are all very eager to start the semester and spend time with their primaries! Starting on January 30th, Emily and Shannon will begin their roles as lead teachers. Both are excited for what the next four weeks have in store for them! As part of their assignments, the lead teachers will be responsible for filling a daily reflection sheet. It will highlight activities from that day. The daily reflection sheet will be located next to the sign-in binder.

Throughout the month of January, the children have shown great interest in construction! Pictured below we have a picture of Aiden building a zoo for an elephant. In the middle, Lucas prepped a wall for demolition. Lastly, Hannah remembered to keep her head safe as she worked diligently with a hammer.

Returning to school after weeks off can be quite an adjustment for our little ones. When transitioning your child from home, remember to be enthusiastic about returning back to school. Be consistent in following daily routines. Always say a firm but friendly goodbye when leaving. As a staff, we are prepared to offer your child comforting words, plenty of affection and an interesting activity to engage them in. Soon the daily separations, and the joy of being together again, will become part of the day for all of you!

Warm wishes,

Ecila, Christina, Krysten, Leigha, Tena
KINDERGARTEN READINESS—Is My Child Ready For Kindergarten?

As we moving through the spring semester, we are excited for all of our preschoolers who will be moving on to kindergarten in the fall semester—all 8 of them!! 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);
- 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