



Dartmouth College Child Care Center Newsletter

Summer 2024

In This Issue:

From the Admin
Director pg. 2

From the Interim
Director pg. 4

Announcements
pg. 5

What's Next pg. 6

Fall Staff List pg. 7

Chickadee One pg. 8

Chickadee Too pg. 10

Owl pg. 13

Hedgehog pg. 16

Otter pg. 20

Badger pg. 23

Black Bear pg. 25

Office: Sunnie McPhetres,
Abby Plummer, Dawn
Cote, Karen Small

Floating Team
Liz Harrington, Brendita
Barnes, Janny Gao

July 4 Bike Parade!





From the Administrative Director

The end of summer always makes me think about transitions. For some reason, the transition from summer to fall seems like the most drastic change of seasons to me. I know that it is not more abrupt than any other seasonal change, but it always feels that way in my mind. Perhaps it has a great deal to do with the school year. I grew up in this area, so school always started *in the fall*. Summer was a time of freedom and vacation and frivolity in my childhood. Although I always enjoyed school, the transition to fall always seemed abrupt and felt like something was taken away.

Now, as a leader at D4C, I have a similar feeling. This is a time when most D4C children and families need to move forward from their current classrooms, their current teachers, and for some, their current classmates and for others, away from D4C entirely. A place that has become familiar and welcoming and comforting will be left behind. I feel that our staff prepare children for the transition in amazing ways, but it is still a transition. Some children welcome the change, they feel strong and brave and ready for anything; they enjoy challenges and face them happily. Other children are more hesitant about change, and they enjoy the safety of their relationships; they get nervous and sometimes even anxious when presented with newness. And other children are more apathetic to the whole situation; it is what it is, and I am neither overly excited to move forward nor am I anxious about the situation either. Each child has their own feelings and their own reactions to this type of transition. We as adults need to accept their reactions and give them whatever kind of support they need.

This will also be a transition for you! The more comfortable you are with your child's transition, the more supportive you can be. Please take time to get to know your child's new space and new teachers. Ask questions! Be prepared for your child's reaction. Be ready for both your child and you to be tired –oh so very tired! Be prepared for tears! We call it the *Sounds of September*. Tears are a way that we show that life is not comfortable at the moment. As Rosey Grier sang (I'm showing my age now):

“It's alright to cry
Crying gets the sad out of you
It's alright to cry
It might make you feel better
Raindrops from your eyes
Washing all the mad out of you
Raindrops from your eyes
It's gonna make you feel better”

I want to share a couple of my favorite transition stories with you.

Story One:

At the time, I was working as the Lead Teacher in the infant room (we were called Teddies at the time). I had a child in that class who always brought her *orange baby* to childcare with her each day. When it came time for her to move forward to the toddler classroom (Pandas), she was a bit apprehensive. We made sure that she and Orange Baby visited the toddler classroom daily. We shared a kitchen space and did many things together. When it was time to move to the Panda room, she put on a brave face and went into the classroom. Her mom dropped her off in the Panda Room, bravely said good-bye, walked out of the room and turned right toward the Teddy Room rather than left out of the building. She came through our doors and dissolved into tears. Her words, "That was the hardest thing that I have ever done. I know that they are great teachers, but they said that she can't carry Orange Baby all day long. I just want to know that she will have comfort when she needs it." We listened. She didn't want us to offer solutions or intervene in any way, she just wanted us to listen. That night she and her daughter came up with a solution. In the morning, they came into the Teddy Room with Orange Baby. They said that Orange Baby is still a baby and needs to be in the Teddy Room. I welcomed Orange Baby like I would any other infant. I wrote a daily sheet for Orange Baby so that the parent and child could see what their day had been like. This lasted for about two weeks, then one morning, Orange Baby went into the child's cubby rather than coming to the Teddy Room. I was sad, but the transition had been made.

Story Two:

I was working as the Lead Teacher in the Pooh Bear Room (3-year-olds). There was a child in the Panda Room who had not been interested in visiting at all during the summer. I saw him in my room maybe twice. Then the day of transition arrived. He jumped through the door in the Pooh Bear Room, flexed his arm muscles and yelled enthusiastically, "I'm a POOH BEAR!"

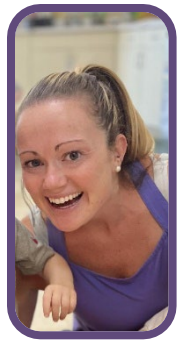
This will be my last D4C school year transition. I will likely have some tears too! Please remember that Abby and I are here to help. If you have concerns or you just need someone to listen, please stop by either of our offices!

I Wish You All Well,

Sunnie

From The Interim Director

Abby Plummer-LaBombard



We are switching things up here at D4C. I am morphing roles and began as Interim Director on August 1st. Sunnie has assumed a new title/role and will be phasing out to her well-deserved retirement! Throughout my six years as Assistant Director, I have worn many different hats. A few of these include, long term substitute, CPR/First Aid trainer, teacher to staff and kids (including my own children) and parent at D4C. I am excited to assume this additional role and take on more responsibilities throughout the center.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

DCCCC Will Be Closed On The Following Days:

- **Monday, August 26, 2024 Transition Day**
- **Tuesday, August 27, 2024 - Transition Day**
- **Monday, September 2, 2024 - Labor Day**
- **Thursday, November 28, 2024 - Thanksgiving Day**
- **Friday, November 29, 2024 - Day After Thanksgiving**
- **December 11, 2024 - Professional Development**
- **Monday, December 23, 2024 - Winter Break**
- **Tuesday, December 24, 2024 -Day Before Christmas Day**
- **Wednesday, December 25, 2024 - Christmas Day**
- **Thursday, December 26, 2024 - Winter Break**
- **Friday, December 27, 2024 - Winter Break**
- **Monday, December 30, 2024 - Winter Break**
- **Tuesday, December 31, 2024 - Winter Break**
- **Wednesday, January 1, 2025 - New Year's Day**

What's Next for Childcare at Dartmouth College

As I wrote in my retirement announcement, President Beilock has made a significant commitment to enhancing childcare availability and affordability for the Dartmouth community. To fulfill this commitment, Josh Keniston and Sara Lester have been tasked with exploring all possible childcare options. The timing of my retirement aligns serendipitously with Dartmouth's childcare explorations. My upcoming retirement provides an excellent opportunity to consider how DCCCC might play a role in meeting the expanding childcare needs at Dartmouth College. I will assist with this research and serve as a liaison to the D4C staff and families.

As a first step, we have selected a group of people to begin this work. It was important that the group be small and that there be representatives from current D4C staff, current D4C families, and people who currently do not use D4C. The charge of this group is to provide guidance to Sara Lester and Josh Keniston in addressing the challenges of childcare at Dartmouth College. This guidance will consist of information about current strengths and areas for future enhancement.

Our first meeting will be Wednesday, August 14. We hope to complete this first phase by the end of August!

Our team consists of:

- Josh Keniston, SVP for Capital Planning and Campus Operations (Executive Sponsor)
- Sara Lester, Chief Human Resources Officer (Executive Sponsor)
- Sunnie McPhetres, Administrative Director and Special Advisor on Childcare (Facilitator)
- Abby Plummer-LaBombard, DCCCC Interim Director
- Jenn Boudro – DCCCC staff member
- Ashley Ricard – DCCCC staff member
- Molly Carpenter, Thayer School Faculty – current DCCCC family member
- Alex French, Enterprise Systems Group – current DCCCC family member
- Sage Jenks, Custodial Services - At-large Parent
- Ben Valentino, Associate Dean for Social Sciences - At-large Parent
- Devin Balkcom, Computer Science Faculty – Council on Work-Life Issues (COWLI) Co-chair

D4C Staff for Fall 2024

Sunnie McPhetres, Administrative Director and Special Advisor on Childcare – 30 years
Abby Plummer-LaBombard, Interim Director – 6 years in September
Dawn Cote, Office Manager – 12 years in December
Karen Small, Administrative Assistant – 9 years in January

Ashley Ricard, Chickadee Lead Teacher – 5 months
Margaret Fraser – Chickadee Teacher – 3 years
Prajna Mohapatra – Chickadee Teacher – 2 years in September

Teresa Hahn, Chickadee Too Lead Teacher – 15 years in February
Michelle Ackerman, Chickadee Too Teacher – 4 years in January

Moya Stevens, Owl Lead Teacher – 15 years
Maya Lopez-Bowlin, Owl Teacher – 7 years in January
Jyanna Vaughan, Owl Teacher – 3 years

Michelle Joki, Hedgehog Lead Teacher – starts September 16, 2024
Jenn Boudro, Hedgehog Teacher – 33 years
Emily Courtemanche, Hedgehog Teacher – 6 years in November

Josie Byam, Otter Lead Teacher – 3 years
Megan Widli, Otter Teacher – 2 years in November
Alejandra Gomez, Otter Assistant Teacher – 5 months

Cat Kaschak, Badger Lead Teacher – 3 years, currently on leave
Elizabeth Darragh, Badger Teacher – 3 years
Porsha Reynolds, Badger Teacher – 2 months

Viviana Rodriguez, Black Bear Lead Teacher – 5 years in January
Hannah Rowland, Black Bear Teacher – 3 years in February
Janny Gao, Black Bear Assistant Teacher – 1 year in October

Liz Harrington, Floating Associate Teacher – 13 years
Brendita Barnes, Floating Associate Teacher – 4 years in October
Ashley Young, Floating Associate Teacher – begins August 26, 2024
Calena Connor, Floating Associate Teacher – begins August 20, 2024

That's a whole bunch of D4C experience! How fortunate are we?

News from the Chickadee Ones

Ashley Ricard
Lead Teacher

Margaret Fraser

Prajna Mohapatra

Wow! It's hard to believe that almost five months have gone by since I began my journey as Lead Teacher in the Chickadee classroom! Since starting here at D4C, I have watched these children grow and learn so much and have become quite attached to them all. It has been a true pleasure being able to enjoy your sweet children each day so far. Those who are moving on, are all doing so well with transitioning to their new classrooms. We've spent many hours exploring the new classrooms, eating lunches there, and getting to know the new teachers.

Here are some highlights from our classroom:

We had a blast during Week of the Young Child-music, cooking, planting seeds, and so much more!

We celebrated many birthdays and even did a triple birthday celebration outside!



Alice often navigates to the sandbox on the playground to do scooping and pouring, practicing those fine motor skills! She loves the “Lollypop” song and has some signature dance moves. She and Max have gone from crawling, to walking to nearly RUNNING!

Max is saying so many words and loves to climb on anything she can-sometimes even the tables and as her teachers quickly redirect, she will giggle and try again.

Bash has been counting to 3, pointing to pictures in books when we ask him to find a certain object on the pages. He also has learned to drink from an open cup with little spilling!

Emilio has had a word explosion in both English and Spanish and has been super gentle with his baby friends-such a sweetie! He loves it when we do any cooking activities and will say “more, more” until it's his turn to help!



Pippa is communicating exceptionally well to adults and children around her and is a natural caregiver to both baby dolls and younger friends. You can often see her reading to her friends and singing “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” with Margaret.

Rhett is talking more and more each day and can follow through with simple requests such as “Please help us clean up the toys”, and “Let’s get your shoes from your cubby”. He’s also big into giving hugs and kisses to his teachers and his friends.

Cecilia is saying three-word sentences regularly and our favorite one is “I am stuck!”” if we give her a hug. She also LOVES dancing, looking at books and can name so many pictures on her own!

Eloise loves when we do any art activities and swinging in the swings on the playground. She is our “attendance taker” and will be thoroughly concerned if any of our class is not present for the day!



News from the Chickadee Toos

Teresa Hahn
Lead Teacher

Michelle Ackerman

This is the hardest time of year...so many transitions and so much preparation for the incoming class.

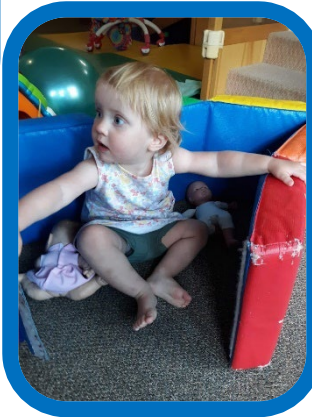
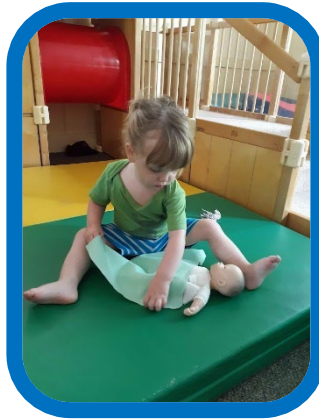
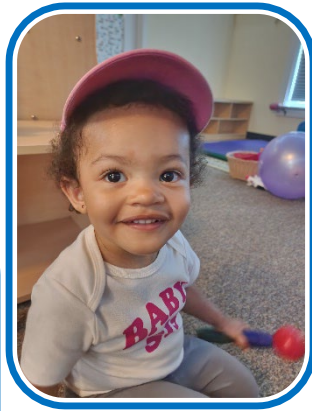
It has been an amazing journey of growth for Chickadee Too. We have witnessed physical, emotional and language development, that is thrilling to observe and be a part of. Thank you for sharing your babies turned toddlers with us!

Teddy, Ivy, Laila, Silas and Sarah will be joining the fun in the Hedgehog room. Get on your walking shoes and prepare for adventure.

Margot, Lulu, Arthur and Morgan are flying across the multi to join the Owl flock. They will find exciting projects, an array of stimulating toys and lots of love and snuggles in that nest.

We have had the pleasure of Emilia French's presence in our room 2 days a week this summer. She will be a full time Chick at the end of the month.







News from the Owls

Moya Stevens
Lead Teacher

Maya Lopez

Jyanna Vaughan

We have had a wonderful Owl year full of a lot of learning. Owls have learned a lot of vocabulary and certainly are past their pointing and babbling days, as now they use full sentences to communicate. Throughout the year they have learned to share toys with friends, count, be considerate of others, the names of colors, and much more.

Violet joined us a few weeks ago, but it's as if she had never left D4C. She made quick friends with her teachers and got used to our routine quickly. She loves playing with the baby dolls and often has at least 2 she is caring for. Outside, she has enjoyed the swings, and even though she's had her share of splashes, always manages to come out clean and dry!



River has learned so many words throughout the year and constantly is expanding his vocabulary with another long word. At the beginning of the year, he and his family inspired us to start a bird's names wall. He and his friends learned to identify squirrels versus chipmunks, chickadees, robins, woodpeckers and much more! He loves telling you stories about Mater and dinosaurs, and will let you know Lightning McQueen says "ka-chow!" We can always count on River to start a dance party!

Simon loves to run and wrestle with his friends. We are sure he will be an adrenaline junkie, given his enjoyment of balancing, leaping, and acrobatics! He loves to play with construction vehicles with friends, read books and snuggle with teachers, and play chase. His favorite songs are "We Are the Dinosaurs", "Wheels on the Bus", and the theme songs for "Bluey".





Sibyl has learned a lot during her Owl year. She is our mini-assistant teacher, as she helps friends remember how to stay safe, or asks if they'd like to do an activity with her. You will rarely see her without "Big Baby" (one of our baby dolls, that she has basically claimed as her own). She loves to dress "Big Baby" and cleans her up if she has a dirty diaper. Sibyl loves to play with all of her friends, go on the swing, and enjoys different kinds of music, asking for "Moon River" by Audrey Hepburn and "Santorini" by Donny Benét.

Freddie has learned so many words and often has something to say about every topic. He's very much into the Owl garden, and helps his teachers weed it so the "[green] beans" can grow up healthy. He's also recently taken interest in the differences between the plants of his favorite snack, cucumbers, and the very similar zucchini. He and "the guys" like to make big construction worker sounds, and he always reminds us of the safety of using a construction hat!



Charlotte is always ready to learn – interested in any activity we've brought into the classroom. She loves to color and often asks for "colors". She has enjoyed the swings, waterplay, meeting new Owl Room helpers, and Magna-Tiles. She always wants to cuddle, and just has to meet you to like you! She likes playing with all of her friends and is so brave to try new things!

Otto is always keeping busy and mowing the lawn! He loves to play construction with his friends or drive the tractor around the room. He bonded well with Jyanna and loves to share cuddles with her. He has loved the swings, watering the garden, playing with the big, black truck and filling it with any yard tools to help get the jobs done. He is always wanting to share a laugh with all of his friends!



Vera has opened up a lot since the beginning of the year. You may now occasionally spot her running around with friends yelling, “I’m running!” She has gotten close with her teachers and now reaches for a hand to hold, tells teacher helpers about zoo animal stories and shares a high five with her new teachers! Vera enjoys playing with babies with Sibyl, running with River, having lunch with Otto and Freddie, and reading books with her teachers.

We will certainly miss all of our little Owls and are so proud of everything they have accomplished! We wish them the best in their future years of learning and growing. Farewell Owl Class of 2024!

Sincerely,

Moya, Jyanna and Maya



News from the Hedgehogs

Jenn Boudro

Emily Courtemanche

Hello and Happy Summer from the Hedgehogs!

We have been having a wonderful time relishing the warm weather and seeing all the changes that summer brought us. In the beginning of June, the Hedgehogs planted their garden in the Owl Playground, since then we have spent tons of time caring for our plants and helping them grow by pulling the weeds and bringing them enough water to drink up. We are starting to see vegetables popping up and can't wait to be able to send them home with our Hedgehogs to share with their families!

July was a bunch of fun, and the Hedgehogs were excited to be involved in our lesson planning (more than usual) by choosing their own day/topic that they wanted to focus on! Our Hedgehogs came up with great themes to celebrate together:

Solaris- Digger Day

Alex- Kitty Cat Day

Sejal- Strawberry Smoothie Day

August- Teddy Bear Day

Zola- Strawberry Day

Mina- Watermelon Day

Vincent- Tractor Day

Nir- Tie-Dye Day

Sunny- Pickles & Olives Day

We have to send a huge thank you to all the wonderful Hedgehog family members who contributed amazing learning experiences for the Hedgehog class this year. We don't recall a year when family member participation was so high. What a special group of families and children we had this year. We will miss you all very much.

Here is a recap of the celebrations and experiences family members participated in this year (in no particular order).

Merriam's dad, Kenny, taught the hedgehogs about the Hanukkah Holiday, reading stories, singing songs and lighting the menorah with the Hedgehogs. Kenny provided the Hedgehogs with shofars on Rosh Hashanah as well.

Costa Rica day with Solaris' mom, Bethany, and dad, Pablo. We flew in an airplane and looked at all the pineapple plants, and animals that you may see in Costa Rica. They put on an amazing musical performance for the Hedgehogs as well.

Sunny's mom, Aleah came and taught us about glaciers before her trip to Greenland to study them. She showed us the equipment needed and played a fun block sliding game with the Hedgehogs. Sunny's dad, Ely, came and played the guitar and banjo for the Hedgehogs. Ely is also an ultimate frisbee player and joined us for Frisbee Day, as part of our summer Olympics.

Sejal's mom came and taught us about Diwali, teaching us some of the traditions of the holiday, reading a Diwali story, and making candle holders with them.

August's Mom provided flags from Greece, and we celebrated with a parade and mini fable stories. August's grandparents joined us as well for a Greek Easter celebration teaching us an egg cracking game the Hedgehogs thoroughly enjoyed. The Hedgehogs still recall that Sejal's was the last to break.

Mina's mom, Amanda taught us about an Iranian holiday called Nowruz, celebrating the arrival of spring and setting up a ceremonial half scene table with symbolic items that start with the letter S. Mina's dad, Christopher, provided us with some music for this holiday as well as music for our Greek Flag Day parade.

Vincent's mom, Elena, came to read us a Passover story and provided a tasting Seder plate (ke'arah)for hedgehogs.

Vincent's Nana, and published author, Chris, visited hedgehogs on Tractor Day, singing old MacDonald had a farm with animals and teaching us about tractor attachments for farming.

Vincent's other grandmother, Mamou, is scheduled to come for France Day on August 16th, to read us a story, teach us words and songs in French, and perhaps bring some crepes for the Hedgehogs to taste.

We celebrated Canada Day, in honor of Alex's dad, Rick with a story and flag parade. Alex refers to them as "red leaf flags."

Zola's mom, Case was our animal/flower resource go to this year. She made paper cupholders and put peony petal flowers inside for a super fun "flower shower".

Zola's Grandma Deb and the Hedgehogs attempted to coordinate a time to come in for Rosh Hashanah and Passover, sadly, we weren't able to make it happen but perhaps when Zola is a badger it could work out.

Aiden's mom, Chenyu, read us a story teaching us the traditions of getting ready for the new year and provided the Hedgehogs with amazing dragon masks for a dragon parade to celebrate the lunar new year. This was the year of the dragon.

Nir's mom, Deepti, and Dad, Prasad, provided delicious treats to the staff at the center in honor of the Indian festival, Navaratri, Nava=nine Ratri=night (9 days and nine nights) celebrated in India, celebrating the victory of good over evil.

Thank you all for enriching our year with your children! And now, for a bit of levity!

Hedgehog Quotes (since the last newsletter):

"I just love gold"



Jenn "It's your sister's birthday, how old is she today?"

"She's just bigger"





“When I get big like Daddy, it will be easier to put the dishes away.”



Jenn “Did your dad have to go to work early today?”

“Yeah, he has a 10:40 meeting with a lot of people ya know?”



“You know your voice has vibrations? If you put your fingers right here, you can feel it” *places fingers on throat to demonstrate*



“We learn a lot of things at school”

Jenn “Yes, we’ve been learning about what animals hatch from eggs and seeing signs of spring”

“Yeah, we learn a lot of crazy stuff in Hedgehogs”



“We don’t look at people’s butts”



“Grand-Dabber is my best friend; he tells me funny jokes”



“I’m a sneaky, sneaky snake” *slithers around on the carpet*



Teacher “who cut your hair today?”

“The person who was old”



“I’m big, I wear underwear, I eat chips”



“Hello, what’s your story?”



“I can’t ride my scooter in the street, a car will come and smash and mush me”



Teacher “you have to leave your dirt outside”

“But I need my dinner!”



Teacher “if you have a sister at home, you can go wash your hands”

“My sister’s not at home, she at school”



Hedgehog was drawing on Mary Grace’s ‘thank you’ card, when asked to smile and say ‘I love you’ for the photo she shouts “I love LETTERS!”



“My mom is sick, she has a lot of phlegm in her throat”



“My mom says you can’t go on private property”



Teacher “Yeah, you’ve been there a time or two, right?”

“Yeah, two.”



“Hey Emily, my dad wiped my Mommy’s butt.”



Hedgehog talking about what frogs eat “And they eat orgy (meaning algae)”



Teacher “Who is on the phone August?”

“Applesauce”



“Hey, my butt is kind of different”



“Car windows go up and down, like pants!”



“When I’m a Doctor, I will be bigger to set up lunches”



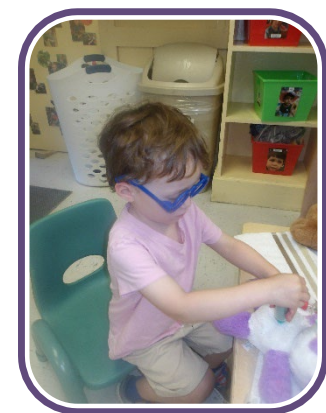
Hedgehog points to the kiddie pool on the front playground and says “Look! There’s the pond!”



“I’m a scary pumpkin Emily, BOO!”



A Hedgehog overhears someone being addressed in the bathroom while he is getting sunscreens and says “He’s having problems”



News from the Otters

Josie Byam
Lead Teacher

Megan Widli

Alejandra Gomez

Hello Otter friends and family, it's that time of year that we say goodbye to our 2023-2024 Otters and welcome our 2024-2025 otters. This group of Otters has been a big change from groups in the past. This is the oldest group of Otters our team has had. We had our first kiddos turn 4 in the Otter room!

Being that this group was so much older than the others it was a nice change of pace, and they taught us a lot along the way. This group has taught us patience and perseverance. We have had to make many changes in the Otter room so that our activities and curriculum met the standards of each child. This included adding more in- depth questions during our circle time, giving more time for the children to respond that what was needed in the past.

Many times, in the Otter room our curriculum is weekly based, and the teachers tend to come up with the themes in the beginning, and begin to ask the kids what they want to learn about later in the year. However, this year we were able to ask the children what they wanted to learn about much sooner! We also had some of our themes last as long as three weeks because the kids were so into it.

Speaking of themes these are some of the themes we have completed

- Otter summer hit!
- Gardening
- Migration
- Spring
- Insects
- Woodland animals
- Community helpers
- Flowers
- Bees
- Farm animals – Hatched baby chicks!
- Ocean animals
- Insects – repeat theme kids asked for again.
- Dinosaurs



We also spent the earliest part of our summer at the creek, out behind the ray school and doing waterplay here at the center.

We asked each one of the Otters what their favorite part of their summer is. These are their responses:

Antonia: when you give me math at the creek, and we counted all of the big rocks by the bridge.

Booker: I liked whale week when we watched the whales breach out of the water and played with whales in the pool.

Caleb: the chickens coming out of the egg.

Gigi: playing in the pool with the sprinkler.

Mattie: I liked when we caught frogs and when we had a big mud puddle in the sand box.

Palmer: I really liked when we walked to the creek and want to go again.

Raiyan: I like playing in the muddy water

Rowan: I liked when we had Ms. Josie's big camping tent and ate lunch in it outside.

Svea: when I get to visit in the Black Bear room.

Tristan: I like when we played out in the big rain with no rain suit.

Before we can say goodbye to our Otter friends we have to prepare them to move on to their next classroom. In the Otter room we like to start this transition early. We like to start as early as two months before their transition. We start slow and they go visit for a half hour or so and move up to having lunch with their new teachers. We then add time to each visit and hope that the sense of sending them to their new classrooms turns into them asking to and wanting to go to the new classroom.

We also like to remind everyone that the transition can take a different amount of time per child. Some children are ready to move forward and ready to go on to the next classroom "no push needed" where there are some kiddos who need a lot of encouragement and sometimes the best approach is to make it their idea. Allow them to choose the days that they go to visit, allow them to make their choices as to how long they stay or what activities they stay for. Another approach that we have done is having their new teachers come into the classroom and build a rapport with the kiddos in their own classroom on their terms.



News from the Badgers

Cat Kaschak
Lead Teacher

Elizabeth Darragh

Porsha Reynolds

Here we are! Exciting changes have taken place in the classroom as we prepare for the transition to the Black Bear room. The children are adapting beautifully and truly thriving, and we couldn't be prouder of their progress. The Badgers are really shining as we focus on social-emotional development. The energy these kids bring is incredible! It's heartwarming to see them engage in teamwork, whether they're making sand food, playing *duck, duck, goose*, enjoying chase games, or resolving conflicts together.

We've been implementing a weekly theme with the Badgers, which has allowed us to teach them valuable communication skills, letters, numbers, and so much more. It's wonderful to see them take the initiative; many can now tell me the day of the week without any prompts, and they confidently lead our morning songs! Most of the Badgers can spell their names, and some are even able to write them. They can count to 20 and have shown impressive shape recognition! Their enthusiasm for creating art with various materials is truly inspiring.

The Badgers are eagerly looking forward to moving up to the Black Bears at the end of the month!





News from the Black Bears

Viviana Rodriguez,
Lead Teacher

Hannah Rowland

Summer in the Black Bear room has been so much fun and filled with many events! Since the spring, the kids have gone on two field trips to Storrs Pond where we had a picnic lunch, swam in the pond, shot each other with water blasters & played racket ball. We had an amazing graduation ceremony in which all the kids got their own graduation cap, diploma, superlative poster, award & photo highlight presentation from the year. We had a super fun ice cream party to celebrate both kid & teacher birthdays & wish each other good luck on our summer adventures & transition to our new schools. Although we only have a few weeks left were very excited for kindergarten and look forward to coming back & visiting the black bear room to share all our new experiences & what new things we are learning

about. We have been spending lots of time getting to know the new kids joining the Black Bear room with visits every day and the current kids have been great role models. They make each new kid feel welcome & include them in their play all throughout the day.

We have been finishing off the year with some very fun curriculum themes. Some favorites being camping, 4th of July (which included a bike parade), ocean, circus, sports/Olympics, accepting differences & more. As some kids' last days have come up sooner than others- we have spent some days doing activities that are that child's favorite activities from the year & saying our farewells with dance parties & special ice cream snacks. We plan to finish our last few weeks of curriculum with a special favorites curriculum, focused on all the current kids' favorite activities from the year as well.

This year we have had the least amount of kids in the summer with many kids in summer camps or traveling before the new school year! That being said, here are a few messages from the kids that are still here about what they are looking forward to in kindergarten or for the new school year –





“I’m happy that I’m bigger now & Kate says sometimes you’ll get treats at the new school!”- Tim



“I’m happy that I’m finally getting bigger, I will learn how to read in kindergarten & can’t wait to play on the new playground!”- Charles



“I will make many new friends!”-Ronan



“I’m happy to be bigger, learn how to write lots of new words & will make a lot of new friends!”-Amelia



“I’m happy for more field trips with the Black Bear teachers & like that I will be older than everyone so I will be the role model!” - Leo.
Z



Thank you all for reading & good luck with your new school year adventures!

Best Wishes,

The Black Bear Team

