

Orfalea Family Children's Center at UCSB

Spring Newsletter 2006

Harnessing the power of change: looking ahead to our expansion and re-accreditation

"Life is a journey, not a destination"... never has this over-used journey analogy seemed more appropriate than as we approach two enormous and exciting tasks, both of which will entail change and transition... the very nature of 'journey'. The two tasks are:

- Opening a new center on campus with 4 infant and toddler classrooms in the 'under construction' Student Resource Building (SRB); the first major expansion in child care at UCSB since 1991
- Pursuing our 4th National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation under a completely 're-invented' system that now includes 400 criteria for assessment.



Puddle stomping anyone? The Children Center at SRB on 3-3-06

These events offer us the opportunity to re-examine and strengthen 'how we do business'. But just what exactly is our business?

We opened a recent lead teacher meeting with the question: What is the most important part of your job, the most important thing you

do here? The following answers are representative of the group as a whole. "Provide a base for families", "help children build positive relationships with one another", "build and maintain supportive relationships" "mentor one another", "help children find *cont'd on page 2*



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What's in an Egg? Reading, Writing & Arithmetic- Sunny Side Up

A recent parent survey indicated that many parents would like more information on what their children are learning here at the Center. In a play and relationship based curriculum, the academic and

cognitive basics are integrated into the daily curriculum and at times it is not readily apparent just how much learning is actually happening. Indeed, most activities, although perhaps planned

with an eye to one area of development, in fact address several areas simultaneously. When early childhood educators speak of 'an integrated curriculum' this is what they mean. Additionally, every

Change cont'd from page 1

their gifts", "assist, share, educate", "make people's lives just a little bit easier", "learn and grow"... .

While heartwarming, this exercise served a much greater purpose; it is the first step in guiding the change to come. As we evaluate ourselves and make necessary changes, *we must remain grounded in our mission and guiding values*. (see insert) The reason for our journey is clear and unchanging: to provide high quality care and education for our children and families while promoting and supporting this high standard for all children and families. The teachers' list of the most important things they do clearly supports this mission and reminds us of

what we must keep sight throughout any transition process.

The next step in guiding the change is to be sure all voices are heard. Two recent Parent Council meetings, as well as two invitations for comment via the parent listserv, have allowed the parent community to raise questions and offer suggestions for facilitating the SRB expansion transition. An upcoming Parent Council meeting, as well as a preliminary self-study survey, will allow for information and ideas to be shared by parents on the NAEYC accreditation process and evaluation. In addition, a parent representative will be included on our accreditation self-study team.

"What people say, what people do and what they say they do are entirely different things."

Margaret Meade

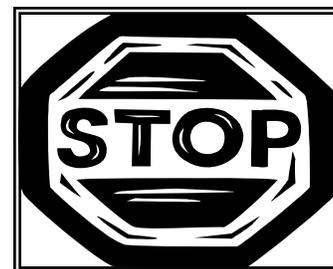
There are many routes to the same destination; participation by parents, teachers, staff and community ensures that the best route will be chosen. "Quality... represents the wise choice of many alternatives." (Foster) Be on the lookout for ways you can help us choose the wisest alternatives as we embark on this next phase of our journey together.

READ THIS NOW !!!

Your child's safety is naturally your greatest concern and ours as well. In a community each member has some responsibility to the other members. Please take your responsibility for the safety of ALL of the children seriously.

- SLOW DOWN in the parking lot and on the surrounding side roads. Children are fast and hard to see.
- DO NOT USE THE PATIO GATE

NEAR RED DOOR TO ENTER THE PLAY YARD OR DROP OFF YOUR CHILD. We are currently working to ensure that no one without a key can access the Center *except* through the front hall. Come into the front hall and walk around. You may continue to exit from this gate. (A patio-side lock and plexi-glass siding will be installed in the next few weeks) Keep in mind that the change in your routine will be



offset by greater security for all of the children.

Thank you for continuing to put safety first for everyone.

Center Updates and Announcements

1. **FREE AND REDUCED CHILD CARE TUITION:** We have \$\$ available (Ca. Dept of Ed grant) for families to help with child care tuition costs. You must meet income criteria and be employed, in school, looking for work or 'otherwise unable' to provide child care for your child. See Holly (front desk) for an application or speak to

Mia, Grant Coordinator with questions (893-5307; office hours 8-1)

2. **Desired Results:** As recipients of the California Dept. of Education child care grant we must complete a thorough program evaluation each year. Each teacher completes an Environmental Rating Scale for her/his classroom. This information, in conjunc-

tion with the children's assessments and parent surveys, is used to set program goals. Our goals this year include identifying and providing additional math, science and literacy activities as well as increased communication with parents on child development and content learning topics.

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Orfalea Family Children's Center

MISSION

We are committed to striving for the highest possible standards in early care and education programs and, in so doing, supporting the children, families, students and ECE professionals of UCSB. University affiliation inspires us to be leaders in early care and education through direct service to families enrolled and as a valuable resource for the greater UCSB and surrounding community.

VISION

The Center strives to be a dynamic, professional force dedicated to improving the lives of young children through providing: consummate care and early education for children, support systems and resources for families and model training and development opportunities for early childhood educators.

VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We strive to integrate our values at all levels in the overall organization so that they govern our interactions and decisions with not only the children and families we serve, but with one another and the greater early childhood education and University communities as well

Respect all individuals, honoring their competencies while offering support and resources for growth

Embrace the diversity in our world, creating a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment that encourages all to thrive

Promote a safe, supportive and caring community

Foster and create environments and dispositions that instill the desire and ability to be a life-long learner

Form and nurture a well-educated, experienced and caring staff of early education professionals

Have fun and find joy in what we do

Schedule of Events

April 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	<i>April 4th Spring Welcome Coffee</i>
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April 12th Parent Support Group

*April 12th, 18th, 26th
Dancing Drum; alternating Tues & Wed*

*April 19th Parent Council Meeting
Mini-topic: Accreditation*

May 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

May 2nd Dancing Drum

May 10th Parent Support Group

*May 11th Parent Council Meeting;
basket-making*

*May 19th End of Year Potluck
& Silent Auction all week*

*May 26th Michael Katz
Storytelling*

June 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
HAPPY	SUMMER	!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!				

May 29th CENTER CLOSED

*June 2nd, 9th, 16th
Michael Katz Storytelling*

June 14th Parent Support Group

June 21st Parent Council Meeting



Eggs cont'd from page 1

Egg-citing Curriculum: What's in it for your child?

attempt is made to begin with a point of reference that is meaningful for the child and to expand from there. When the teachers build upon children's interests to plan curriculum it is referred to as '*emergent curriculum*'; Learning is generally more powerful when it is meaningful to the learner. Eggs provide a truly wonderful vehicle for an integrated preschool curriculum: science, math, language, literacy and more, all wrapped up in one unique package. What could be more awesome than the familiar turned unfamiliar, as children experience the enormous ostrich egg (and chicken eggs and tiny quail eggs too) up close and personal?! Watch for them in coming weeks.

- The physical knowledge we gain through hands-on exploration enables us to make comparisons and relationships as we build on knowledge we already possess. The ability to construct relationships in our own mind is the basis for 'logico-mathematical' thinking. The first step is to use our powers of observation: >We look at the egg and make guesses as to what it is and holds. >We touch the egg, pass it around and use descriptive words such as: *Smooth, hard, heavy, enormous, cold, tough*. >We stand on the ostrich egg & test its strength.
- We analyze the new information, introducing scientific and mathematical terms and concepts >We make predictions and estimate the size of the yolks, thinking about the small quail shell, medium chicken shell and extra large ostrich. Our estimates are compared to the actual. >We hypothesize about what might be inside. "*A chicker!*" is a common guess (not 'a chick!'). >We consider multiple solutions for how to open this hard shell.
- We cook our tremendous egg. Cooking is the ideal 'developmentally appropriate' integrated curriculum. >We wait and take turns (*social - emotional dev.: cooperation*) stirring (*physical dev.: fine motor and motor planning*). We follow a specific sequence (*cognitive dev.: literacy skill*) as we add extra ingredients. We observe the change of liquid to solid (*cognitive dev.: science*) as the eggs are heated. We set the table with one spoon for each place (*cognitive dev.: one-to-one correspondence, mathematical thinking, prediction and planning skills*). We enjoy one another's company (*social-emotional dev.: social skills, friendship, Language dev.*) as we sit to eat a healthy meal (*physical development., nutrition*) we prepared together (*Social-emotional dev.: pride of accomplishment and collaboration*).

Finally this learning is generalized and expanded as we weave it throughout the curriculum: reading, writing stories, painting eggs, sorting and matching... We watch and guide as it evolves into new areas of related interests: tadpoles, silkworms, growing seeds and that's what in an egg!

Updates and announcements cont'd from page 2

3. **Big giant thank yous (just a few of the many deserved):**

- We sure do appreciate your appreciation. Thank you for wonderful lunches from Parents to Staff each month.
- Our many recent volunteers: Jean and Jude our Seniors & Children (SAC) friends, United Way and parents and the several sororities all of whom have helped to clean and spruce up our classrooms, yards and gardens.
- Enrichment & fundraising committees for bringing many wonderful events and activities: Magic Flute, Tom Hunter, Dancing Drum, Alison, the list goes on and on.
- Our TA Sara & her parents for a new digital camera for center-wide use
- To all parents and staff who gave so generously to the Heart

to Heart project; a special thanks to Rick Worth for his time, effort & talent in helping create the Orange Door CD.

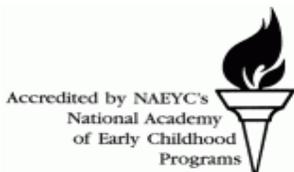
4. **Help is on the way!** The parent survey indicated a desire for more information on accessing local resources. Contacts and suggestions are available at Childrenscenter.sa.ucsb.edu. Family Coordinator Diane Jones has a parent library and article file on topics as diverse as divorce, siblings, moving, discipline, sleep routines, death and child development. She has information on local services ranging from mental health, parenting support and social services to fun things to do in Santa Barbara with kids! (893-4904) Please call or drop by her office

5. **An extra special thank you to Marilyn Jorgenson** for donating her warmth and expertise by offering individual parenting support for the past two months. Watch for her special touch and please join in the upcoming Parent Support Groups.

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Hand to Hand & Heart to Heart: *"...the solace of connection when strangers collide"*



Victoria Voss, UCSB Children's Center alumna, making a new friend
Sometimes your heart is just barely big enough to hold all of your emotions. This was certainly the case when I had the distinct honor of representing our Center in a visit to Richton Head Start in Richton, Mississippi. I wish I were eloquent enough to express to you the warmth of the welcome and the sincere appreciation shared by the teachers

and staff for the cards, pictures, books and check we (children, staff, families and other friends) sent in February to this Katrina affected program. The tears were flowing all around even before I presented the lovely quilt made by Yolanda Garcia, Orange Door's prayer flags with words of Peace and the Orange Door children's CD inspired by their wish to help. It was a remarkable example of the big difference that can be felt when each of us gives if even just a small bit of ourselves. They all asked that I convey their sincerest appreciation to you. If you are ever in Southeastern Mississippi and need a friendly face or a warm hug... I can tell you where to find them. We've all made some new friends.



Measuring clay snakes in the Pre-kindergarten Class

Group time Stretches with 3's and 4's

