



# Discovery Zone Gazette

## The Twelve Days of Infants

The month of December we learned about dressing warm. We enjoyed our winter clothes flip book while describing and showing the infants each article of clothing. For their cognitive development we made



mittens using their hand prints while singing "Mitten Music" and "Warming Up". During their physical play we would encourage the infants to point to where the item of clothing would go.

Next we learned about stockings. We read the book, The Twelve Days of Christmas and also made our special Christmas gifts for our wonderful parents. For their social/emotional development, we hid toys in a stocking and encouraged

the infants to find it inside and helped guide them if needed. We practiced our body awareness by finding our stockings "socks".

Santa and reindeer was our next theme. We enjoyed reading, The Night Before Christmas and singing many Christmas songs; for example "Jingle Bells". For the infants social/emotional development we imitated Santa and walked around saying "Ho! Ho! Ho and Merry Christmas!", while encouraging them to find their belly. We painted reindeer's by using their feet and hands, which came out very adorable!

'Christmas and Hanukkah' was our next theme. We read the book My First Christmas and Hanukkah to help practice their listening and language skills. For their cognitive skills we painted a Christmas tree, as a group, and looked for

them outside our classroom door. Next we used an empty box and put toys inside. We encouraged the infants to open the box to find what's inside which they seemed to really enjoy.

'New Year's' was our next theme. We read the book Hooray for the New Year and sang the song "Let's Give a Cheer, for the New Year". We practiced their problem solving and recognition by counting down numbers out loud and on our fingers.

Next month we will be learning about hibernation, snow/snowmen, penguins, etc. We would like to wish Connor a Happy 1st Birthday who will be celebrating January 16th! The infant room would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah and happy healthy New Year!

Discovery Zone Learning Center

## December 2011

### Important Dates:

- Closed 1/2
- 1/11 Special

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## Snow Much Fun in Miss Sarah's Class



What a fun filled month of December it has been! Miss Sarah's classroom started

off learning all about 'wintery fun'. The pre-schoolers practiced their fine motor skills by making coffee filter snowflakes.

We practiced folding the coffee filter and then cutting out shapes. When it was opened, it created unique snowflakes! We

## Miss Sarah's cont.

talked about how each is different and no two snowflake is alike! As a center choice, the preschoolers got to run their toy cars over a large block of ice. They also sprinkled salt on it and talked about what happened. We learned it was very slippery driving conditions! The preschoolers practiced their gross motor skills by "ice skating"! Wax paper was tied with string around their shoes as they glided across the floor. The children also practiced their math skills with mitten matching. They found matching pairs by recognizing the number on one, and the number of snowflakes on the other to create a match!



Snowmen was the next theme of the month! The preschoolers enjoyed reading stories such as Frosty the Snowman, All You Need for a Snowman, Snowmen at Night, Snow Family, and Snowie Rolie! During circle, the children talked about what a snowman wears and looks like. Each child then contributed a piece of a snowman until we had a whole snowman drawn on the whiteboard. The preschoolers practiced their sensory skills by creating dough snowmen. They used flour, water, and salt to make three balls to create a snowman. They then added twigs as arms! The children also created snowmen ornaments, which ended up being one of their favorite activities! They put a puddle of glue on wax paper and added a hat, nose, eyes, and buttons. After a few days, they peeled it off and it was able to hang from string as an ornament. As a center choice

activity, they looked through a large magnify glass at items that made a snowmen. These included a scarf, carrot, twigs, and a hat. They practiced descriptive words and oral language when describing what they saw.

The next theme during the month of December was winter holidays. The preschoolers read stories such as Russel's Christmas Magic, Hanukkah, Hanukkah Lights, The Sweet Smells of Christmas, and Clifford's Christmas. The preschoolers practiced their fine motor skills by making egg carton ornaments. They painted the egg carton then laced the pipe cleaner through the hole to hang on a Christmas tree! They practiced using scissors and tracing when making Santa's Reindeer. When learning about Hanukkah, we talked about how it is often called the festival of lights. The preschoolers made a menorah by tracing their hands onto a piece of paper and then cut them out. They added orange paint to their fingerprints with glitter to show the candles burning bright! During circle time, we practiced retaining information when singing Christmas carols. They began singing them all day to each other!

The last theme was Holiday Fun! These two days were spent learning about New Years! During circle, the children learned about what New Years is, what year it will be next, and how to celebrate! They also learned how to say "Happy New Years!" in different languages such as Chinese, French and Spanish! The preschoolers practiced their fine motor skills by decorating construction paper then folding it into a cone to make party hats! During center choice, Miss Sarah's class talked

about New Years resolutions and what we want to work on for the upcoming year. They dictated what their resolution was then illustrated a picture of them working on it.

Miss Sarah and her friends in her preschool would like to welcome Kaden, Tiernan, Eleana, Michayla and their families to our classroom! We would also like to wish Rylan (12/19) a happy birthday! Next month Miss Sarah's class will learn about Arctic Animals, Manners, Birds, and Community Helpers! Keep practicing your letter of the week, you are all doing GREAT!!

A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR

## Some Red Nosed Toddlers

Our toddler friends started off with a fun week of reindeer projects. Some of the projects included them working on their fine motor skills when making Rudolph headbands, antler painting, handprint reindeer, hand and foot reindeer, and Rudolph puppets. They worked on two step direction projects when they added antlers onto the reindeer. They also worked on gross motor movements when they jumped over reindeers and did a reindeer dance. Our toddlers worked on their language skills at circle time when we sang "Reindeer Pokey", "Ten Little Reindeer", and "Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer". They also worked on



matching with a reindeer and carrot matching game, and we also worked on taking turns when they came up one by one at circle and "fed" a reindeer.

For the next week we talked about hibernating ani-

mals. The toddlers learned new vocabulary words when they played a game of "Who Am I?" and had to name the animals that were hiding. They worked on their fine motor when they did turtle threading and sponge painting caves, along with ripping paper. They hunted for bears to work on their trial and error skills, and they hunted for frogs in the sensory table. They worked on their horizontal and vertical drawing with crayons and pictures of bats. They hopped like frogs and pretended to be bears for some gross motor activities.

The next week we had a week of holiday celebration projects. They crushed candy canes and mixed it with red paint, then they painted with it to have a peppermint smelling paper candy cane. This was a great sensory and science experiment. The toddlers worked on fine motor skills when they put stickers on a Christmas tree, and made a tissue paper wreath. They worked on counting when they put can-

dles on a menorah and counted latkes in a pan. They also were creative when they put mitten, boots and a cotton ball hat onto a star Santa.

The last week of December was a short week and we had a theme of Happy New Year. The children made some New Year's hats, had a confetti throwing fun mess, decorated a New Year's ball and made New Year's party mix. At circle they worked on language skills when we repeated a new rhyme. We also took turns playing and making noise with New Year's noise makers. Happy new year everyone!!!!!!



Next months themes are snow, winter wonderland, winter animals, sensory play and groundhogs.

Welcome to the new friends and families in our room and good luck to Brennan and his family as they start a new journey outside of DZ.

## Kindergartener's Learn More About Holidays

In the month of December Kindergartener's learned all about the different holidays that are celebrated. We started off with Kwanzaa which we learned starts on December 26th and last 7 days. During this week we used our fine motor skills and make a Kinara out of paper. A Kinara is the candle holder that is used for the Kwanzaa celebration. We also learned that there is one black, three red, and three green candles. While learning about Kwanzaa we also made animal cracker magnets with our best creative skills.



After Kwanzaa we moved on

to Hanukkah which is the Festival of Lights, it last for seven days and this year it started on December 20. During this week we worked on our cutting skills and made a paper dreidels and then learned how to play the game of dreidel. We also used our counting skill to count how many latkes we had in our frying pan, and how many we had as a class. We figured out who had the most and who had the least amount too.

After a week of Hanukkah we learned about Christmas which was a class favorite. We learned about the story behind the candy cane and, we also counted down to Christmas. During the week we made

a 3D Christmas tree which we used our best fine motor skills for. We also made a special gift for mom



and dad, and we hope that they enjoyed them very much on Christmas morning. We became Santa's little helpers this week too, when we became little elves that you can see on our holiday bulletin board.

We worked on the letters M, N, and O as well. We also celebrated to very special birthdays this month too, both Khanur and Ellie turning five. During the month of January we will be looking forward to learning about the season of winter, Martin Luther King Jr., and math.

# Interesting Information

## Tips on Nurturing Your Child's Curiosity

Babies are born learners, with a natural curiosity to figure out how the world works. Curiosity is the desire to learn. It is an eagerness to explore, discover and figure things out. The more curious a child is, the more he learns. Nurturing your child's curiosity is one of the most important ways you can help her become a lifelong learner.

Parents and caregivers don't have to "make" their children curious or "push" their children to learn. In fact, research shows that it is a child's internal desire to learn (their curiosity), not external pressure, that motivates him to seek out new experiences and leads to greater success in school over the long term.

Curiosity is something all babies are born with. They come into the world with a drive to understand how the world works:

- A newborn follows sounds, faces and interesting objects with her eyes.
- An 8-month-old shakes a rattle and then puts it into his mouth to see what this object can do.
- A toddler takes a stool to reach the countertop where the phone is—a "toy" she loves to play with.

A 2-year-old pretends she is the garbage collector and puts all her stuffed animals into the laundry basket "garbage truck" to figure out what it feels like to be in the other person's shoes.

Below you will find a series of tips for ways you can nurture your child's curiosity.

Model interest in the world around you. Take a walk outside and wonder aloud about the trees, the sky, the stars. Also let your child see you pursuing interests of your own.

Follow your child's lead. Encourage natural interests. Children learn so much more through activities that capture their attention and imaginations. If he likes music, play it for him often, make and play instruments together, dance together. If bugs are her thing, give her a shovel and a net. Find books on bugs and read to her.

Answer questions simply and clearly and according to your child's development. You will answer a question about where babies come from much differently if your child is three or thirteen. And, no matter the child's age, always ask them first what their thoughts are before answering. A five-year old asked her mother, "Where did I come from?" Mother proceeded to talk in depth (anxiously stumbling on every other word) about the reproductive process. Her child looked at her quizzically throughout, and at the end responded, "I mean, did you come from New York like Daddy or somewhere else?"

And, if you don't have the answer, say so. Let them know it's okay not to have all the answers. This also provides an opportunity to model how to find answers. Go with her to the library or call someone else who might know.

Use the library! Take this field trip together often. Find out when your local branch has its storytime. Books are windows into all kinds of worlds to delight the curious mind. Young children who are exposed to books become better readers. Let your child choose his own books. Studies show that it doesn't matter whether children are reading books about rockets or comic books, the key is that their interest is captured and that they like to read.

Stimulate your child with open-ended questions. These are questions that don't have a right or wrong response, and can't be answered with only one word like "yes" or "no". "How do you feel about.....", "What was (such and such experience) like for you....", "Tell me about what happened in school today." These kinds of questions encourage your child to develop his thoughts and ideas, shows love and interest, and will give you a window into his inner life.

Create an interesting environment. Babies spend one-fifth of their waking hours in focused gazing. They're curious about what's in their surroundings. Pictures on the wall and normal family activity are naturally fascinating. Give baby safe toys and objects to explore. Rotate your supply to keep it "fresh."

Redirect, don't discourage. Try to figure out what is capturing her interest, or what skill she is trying to master and create a safe and acceptable way for her to explore. For example, if your toddler is exploring the houseplants, put them out of reach but offer a close alternative. Put some dirt in a plastic container for your child to play with and inspect. If she likes to pour the water from her cup onto the high chair or floor, move her to the kitchen floor, bathtub or backyard after the meal so she can explore and experiment with water without driving you crazy. This will also teach children problem-solving skills, creative and acceptable ways to do and get what they want.

Allow time for open-ended activities. Unlike some toys that are designed to be used a certain way, materials like boxes, blocks, water, sand, pots and pans, and any art material, can be used imaginatively. Do not tell your child what to do with the material, how to do it or what it should look like in the end. Let your child's curiosity be her guide.



# Miss Holly's Class Isn't Cookie Cutter

Miss Holly's preschool is not a cookie cutter classroom, except for the first week in December! December 1 - 7 is National Cookie Cutter Month and the preschoolers enjoyed many different activities involving cookie cutters!



At circle, the children used cookie cutters to make patterns as well as go on a treasure hunt for hidden cookie cutters! Project allowed the preschoolers to use their fine motor skills in cutting out sugar cookies, as well as helping Ms. Holly making dough to cut out for our special holiday presents for mom and dad! They loved using play-dough and cookie cutters to make shapes and used social skills as they role played baking cookies in dramatic play!

Nursery rhymes were all the children were saying as they spent a week talking about Baa, Baa Black Sheep, Hickory Dickory Dock, Star Light Star Bright, Little Boy Blue, and Wee Willie Winkie! Each morning, they talked about what each rhyme had in it and then made a pro-

ject to go with it. The preschoolers loved using their fine motor skills to cut out stars and decorate them. They used their culinary skills to watch as peanut butter chips turned into peanut butter and helped stir and place our "haystacks". They loved talking about the hands on a clock for hickory dickory dock and used their fine motor skills to cut out and create their own clock.

The spirit of December holidays filled Preschool B as they learned about the winter holidays! For the first few days, the children learning about Christmas! They explored rhyming words and practiced recognizing their letters at circle. They used fine motor skills to make circles for Santa's face, decorated a Christmas tree and used their hands to make Rudolph! Then they explored a day for Hanukkah and for Kwanzaa.



Using life savers and candles, the kids worked together to build a Menorah! At the easel, pictures of the driedel symbols were posted so the kids could use their visual skills as well as their fine motor skills to copy the symbols! Kwanzaa was a feast for all! Using team work, small math concepts, and fine motor skills, the preschoolers cut up bananas and mixed together some ingredients to help make a Kwanzaa feast banana bake!

Miss Holly and her preschool friends would like to wish Jenna (12/8) a very happy birthday! Coming up in January, Preschool B will be learning about gingerbread men, snow, ice, and polar animals and welcoming a new friend, Mason.

## -Center News-

- If your child is going to be out or late for the day, please call/email the center to update us.
- The cabinets are turning out wonderfully! They are almost complete. Next on the list is carpets!
- Keep watching us on Facebook, we have lots of new post and pictures every week!
- **Reminder-Tuition is due by Wed. 8 am to avoid a late fee.**
- **Please remember to get your**

**child's flu shots and to have all immunizations and physicals updated.**

- Miss Sarah's Preschool Room will be getting an assistant teacher soon due to the population of the class growing. Discovery Zone is welcoming Ms. Yari. She is attending school for her certificate in ECE and plans to continue all the way through for a bachelors degree someday. We will see Ms. Yari starting part-time and eventually

lead to full time as the class grows.