



Circle Time

The mission of the Parent-Infant Center is to support parenting by enabling young children to grow and learn in a safe, stimulating, loving environment



Message from Anjali Gallup-Diaz: Director of School Age Programs

Happy New Year!

This is my favorite greeting of the year and sometimes I find myself still wishing it right into the month of March! Regardless

of whether it's January 1st, Lunar New Year, the spring equinox, or Deepavali, the wish is sincere, for a sense of renewal, a rejuvenated spirit, and the happy prospect of new challenges and goals.

At the After School Center, we're looking forward to a new year of building friendship and cooperation skills as we continue our usual pursuits of making art, singing, acting, cooking, storytelling, keeping up with

homework, learning yoga, and practicing physical fitness.

Thanks to our recycling club, we'll also learn about "going green" and, during snack time, we will learn about what foods are best for us. That New Year's challenge will take some discipline, but we're all committed to it. If you are a parent who would like to show us how to make healthy snacks or give a talk about nutrition, I would love to hear from you.

So, we're off to a promising start! To paraphrase Mark Twain, even if, by March, we've started paving the road to perdition with our resolutions, at least we'll be doing so in good community.

Calling all green thumbs! It's time for PIC's Plant Sale

If you love gardening, flowers, herbs or just plain digging in dirt, we need your help—join the PIC Spring Plant Sale Committee today!

We'll be meeting at 5:00 pm on **Wednesday, Jan. 25**, to begin organizing the annual event, which supports PIC's Scholarship Fund.

Green thumbs are welcome — but we have plenty of tasks for all.

We would like to take the Plant Sale online this year. Are you savvy with systems for Internet commerce? Please help!

We also need volunteers to:

- Select plant varieties
- Coordinate volunteers
- Prime and seal flower pots
- Help with publicity
- Create a raffle basket
- Organize the bake sale.

Cheryl Gallup



For more information or to get involved, contact Director of Development/Communications Rachel Crossot at rcrossot@parentinfantcenter.org.

Doodlebugs use bubbles to stay healthy

The Doodlebugs have been practicing proper hand washing to reduce the spread of germs during this cold and flu season. Doodlebug teachers engage the children in hand washing while offering a healthy practice and fun learning experience. We invite the children to come to the sink and sing songs while waiting their turn to wash hands. We sing “This is the Way We Wash Our Hands” to help the children associate the song with the hand-washing process.

Keeping with best practice, teachers model proper hand washing techniques, along with washing hands for at least 20 seconds to ensure proper cleaning. The children are so excited to wash hands; they rub their hands together and



say “wash, wash.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control, hand washing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection. In spite of all the studies about the benefits of hand washing, improper or infrequent hand washing continues to be a major factor in the spread of disease in a child care setting. The spread of colds, flu and

intestinal infections can be very harmful to children. Proper hand washing contributes to the reduction of disease and fewer sick days.

One of the best ways to reduce the spread of germs is to remember to wash your hands and your child’s hands when arriving each day in the classroom. Another good practice is to develop routines at home. By starting with washing hands before meals, as well as after diapering and toileting, you can help your child practice hand washing more frequently. Proper hand washing works and is an easy way for everyone to stay healthy.

— Monica Williams

Starfish explore people & places

Cultural diversity is more than a source of special snacks and interesting social practices. When the Starfish explore other cultures, our approach embodies the philosophy of a place and its people. Experiencing new cultures in an emotionally safe place such as school encourages young children to welcome learning about various cultural perspectives. Identifying how we are the same and how we are different (“We use forks but Ethiopians traditionally use a flat bread to eat their food” or “Hindus don’t eat meat and my family doesn’t either”) helps the Starfish feel connected to children all over the world.

We’ve been exploring our own cultural diversity in the Starfish room: Parents taught us about Rosh Hashanah and Diwali (Hindu Festival of Lights) and we discussed family Thanksgiving traditions. We played with dreidels and practiced counting skills as we spun for gelt (chocolate coins for Chanukah). We made paper garlands for Christmas and feasted on sweet potatoes and corn as we learned the seven principles of Kwanzaa. We also made piñatas to represent the North Star.

Now that winter break is over we’ll make bread for Los Reyes Magos (Latin American holiday of the Three Kings) and we will dance



with lions and dragons for Lunar New Year. With so many traditions and cultures to share, we’re always discovering something new about our world and ourselves!

— Kali Strand

Grasshoppers dig dinosaurs

Late autumn brought cooler temperatures, falling leaves and a curiosity for things buried long ago. The Grasshoppers have been focusing on dinosaurs and the Earth as it was 65 million years ago — a topic that captures the imagination of young and old alike.

In the Grasshopper classroom, we use a web chart to help us with such an expansive topic. We write what we know, what we would like to know, and what we learn. The kids knew dinosaurs were around a long time ago, and that the dinosaurs died out suddenly, but how did they die? How big were the dinosaurs? What color were they? What



did dinosaurs eat? We used all of our available resources to answer these important questions, from trips to the library, to books on the topic and dinosaur songs.

Our greatest resource was a trip to the Academy of Natural Sciences, where we not only saw real and replica skeletons of the great lizards,

but we had the chance to touch real fossils (which are made of rock, not bone) and met paleontologists and people who were cleaning off fossils that would be used to reconstruct a dinosaur.

We learned that dinosaurs were not only land-living reptiles, but that reptiles also dominated the sky and sea. If you are interested in finding out more about these great reptiles from long ago, ask a Grasshopper to sing you a verse from “Triceratops Song” or maybe “The King of the Dinosaurs.” It will make you smile, and you might just learn something new.

— Brooks Wilson

After School Center Winter Gala



ASC kids demonstrated tons of talent at the Winter Gala — everything from musical performances to original plays and impressive feats of juggling!



Heads up!

Kindergarten registration

Kindergarten registration begins for Philadelphia public schools on **Monday, January 23**. Penn Alexander has limited kindergarten space and families have had to get in line very early to get a place. More information will be available to kindergarten-bound families soon. In the meantime, if you have any questions, contact Lynne at lpiersol@parentinfantcenter.org.

Report your PPP hours

In early January every family will receive a current **report of PPP hours** recorded so far. If you have hours that you have not submitted, please do so as soon as possible by slip or email to Lynne.

Summer leave deadline is March 1

Although summer vacation seems far away, PIC needs to know your plans **by March 1, 2012**. If you are planning an extended vacation or leave (4 to 10 consecutive weeks) between June 15 and August 31, you must notify Family Life Coordinator Lynne Piersol at lpiersol@parentinfantcenter.org in writing by March 1.

Save the date! January 26

Shake out your winter blues with a night out for grown-ups at PIC!

On **Thursday, Jan. 26**, from 6-8 pm, we'll share food and drink, music and a chance to relax and kick back while the kids enjoy fun activities and a light supper.

Surveys have shown that PIC families are looking for more opportunities to socialize, so come on down! Watch the PIC e-news for more details and signup sheets in your child's classroom.



This event is organized by the Parent Involvement Committee, which next meets on **Thursday, Jan. 12**, 5:45 - 7:15 pm. All parents/caregivers are welcome. Child care and light supper provided. Email Lynne Piersol at lpiersol@parentinfantcenter.org by Jan. 10 if you plan to attend.



Snow Alerts

When winter storms come, PIC tries to remain open so that parents can go to work or school. **Here's what you need to know about PIC closings:**

- If U Penn closes, PIC closes (*but Penn hardly ever closes!*).
- **If it snows overnight**, a decision to close is made by 6 am. Check the website www.parentinfantcenter.org or voice mail (215-222-5480) or KYW News Radio. PIC's school closing number is **3018**.
- **If it snows during the day** and public/parochial schools close, we will pick up ASC children and bring them to PIC.
- When a daytime storm is bad enough to close PIC, you will receive a phone call asking you to pick up your children. *Please come promptly so that our staff can get home safely, too.*

