



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

10 years of ArtStart - Let's celebrate!

This year marks the 10th anniversary of ArtStart — PIC's fall fundraiser and annual celebration of children's artistic creativity. Please join us on Thursday, Oct. 22, from 5:30 - 8pm to help support the PIC Scholarship program and Sweet Dreams, our campaign to expand PIC's programs and services.

At ArtStart, adults enjoy wine and cheese and other delicious treats while bidding at our silent auction. No need to worry about finding a sitter, PIC kids have pizza and entertainment, too!

Tickets to ArtStart are \$50 per couple; \$30 single. If that stretches



your budget, no problem. Selling ArtStart raffle tickets also earns admission to the event.

Here's how you can help:

1. We need auction items! Do you frequent a local business that

might donate a gift certificate? Do you knit, throw pottery, bake gourmet cupcakes? Let us know!

2. Do you know a restaurant or caterer that would donate food or beverages?
3. Come and mount kids' artwork on Saturday, Oct. 17, or help us decorate the chapel the day of the event.

Learn more at the next ArtStart meeting Tuesday, Sept. 15, at 5 pm.

If you have questions, contact Chelsea Koziara

[ckozyara@parentinfantcenter.org]

This newsletter brought to you by the letter 'R' for Relationships

Our featured article this month (on page 4 of this newsletter) talks about the importance of relationships in a quality early education program.

Building strong relationships between parents is also at the foundation of building a strong sense of community within our center.

As many of you know, PIC hosts two major fundraisers each year that support our scholarship fund and PIC programs: ArtStart in the fall and the Plant Sale in the spring. BUT - there

are many other opportunities to get involved and foster family-to-family relationships. Below are just a few of the ways:

Board Committees— The Board of Directors is always looking for parents who would like to donate their time and serve on one of the many committees. You do not need to be a member of the Board to get involved. Information about the Board is included on the insert in this newsletter.

Parent Involvement Committee - Join PIC's network of parents whose mission is to motivate others to be involved in the life and direction of the center and build a stronger community of families. If you are interested, contact Lynne Piersol, Family Life Coordinator.

The next Parent Involvement Meeting (open to all) is **Thursday, September 17, from 5-6 pm**. And be sure to attend your classroom potluck to meet more PIC families!

Bumblebees

The teachers in the Bumblebee room work to build strong bonds with the children by responding warmly and supportively to their actions. As a result, the Bees learn to feel secure and trust us.

While this attachment is being formed, the Bees are busy building their own friendships with their peers. From the time even the youngest Bees enter our room, they are able to interact with their classmates. The older children want to talk to them, bring them toys and touch them. With close teacher supervision, the older Bees learn how to interact in ways that leave the babies safe and happy.

Teacher modeling and gentle directions are important components of early social interactions. We commonly see older Bees repeating our interactions with the babies. Helping to rock the babies is an especially popular activity; we've even seen infants rocking each other!



During these interactions teachers lend support by pointing out the effects of the children's actions. We might tell a child, "You brought Grace a toy. She's smiling. That made her happy." The Bees quickly learn how to read social cues. They recognize when another child is smiling or crying and learn to act appropriately.

Children often bring toys or pat the head of a distressed child. When an act causes smiling and laughing from peers, the act is often repeated. Of course, for young children, it takes a lot of practice to learn positive social interactions. They don't yet have the self-control

to stop themselves from acting in a more aggressive manner. As they mature they can more readily identify and act out the behaviors that net a positive result. These are important social skills that have the added benefit of helping to form bonds between the children.

Recently the Bees have been enjoying making noises together. One child will shout and another will repeat it, causing smiles and giggles. The Bees are identifying their classmates as people who make them feel good. They show excitement when their friends enter in the morning and ask for them when they are not there.

Bees who have graduated to toddler rooms are met with hugs in the gym and on the playground. These early friendships help provide the foundation for future relationships. The Bumblebees are learning how emotionally fulfilling human interaction can be.

— *Chelsea Reichert*

Fireflies

The Fireflies have had a great summer. When the Fireflies started showing an interest in the story "The 3 Little Pigs," we decided to expand on their interest and begin a classroom theme all about fairy tales. Some of the Fireflies even memorized the words to the story and started to "read" to the other kids or repeat phrases as we read aloud.

We took a trip to the library and took out a bunch of fairy tales. The Fireflies adored the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff. The class was glued to the story from the very first page. It was wonderful to see such an interest in books.

In addition to reading, the Fireflies put on plays of the fairy tales during Circle Time. They loved this activity so much that soon all they were asking about was putting on plays. They wanted to be Goldilocks, Baby Bear, the Troll or the Big Billy Goat. It really brought out the best in them. It was wonderful to see them so excited about dramatic play during Circle Time or searching for their favorite fairy tale on the book shelf during free play.

As teachers, we enjoyed asking them questions like "What would you do if you were the frog? or "What if you had long hair like Rapunzel?"



"How would you take care of it?" The conversations were both spontaneous and funny.

We also made up our very own fairy tales!

See *Fireflies*, next page

Starfish

As we look back on summer time in the Starfish classroom it can be summed up in one word: HOT!

Our August theme was "Summer Fun." Summer is the favorite season of most children. Through this theme, the children became more aware of summer weather, activities, food, vacations and summer clothing. As the summer approached, we explored the outside and inside of a watermelon and then ate it for snack. We tried on shorts, sunglasses, sandals and sunhats in the dramatic play area and talked about why we wore those clothes when it was hot outside.

We ate picnic lunches on the PIC playground, we prepared fruit juice popsicles for snack and we had a beach party in the classroom, complete with beach balls, beach blankets and leis (Hawaiian necklaces with many flowers). It was fantastic!

During our outdoor activities, we experimented by spraying colorful



paints in spray bottles on a white sheet tied to our fence. At Circle Time, we discussed summer safety ("Lather everyone up with sunscreen," Wear bike helmets when we ride") and we also discussed our favorite places to go for summer vacations. Hands down, the Starfish favorite was "the beach."

Playing with water in our sensory area was one of the most absorbing activities for the Starfish. The possibilities for playtime were endless. Water provides some wonderful opportunities for learning. When the

Starfish play with water they explore what happens when they try different things with it like pouring and measuring, or what water does in a container, or how many spoonfuls it takes to fill up a measuring cup, or whether or an item (sea shells, rocks, sea creatures) will sink or float.

The highlight of our summer was grabbing a cool bottle of water along with our trip bag, putting on our swimsuits, slathering on some sunscreen and heading out on the PIC blacktop for water play! The Starfish enjoyed running through the sprinkler, relaxing in the pool and exploring water toys with friends. Not only do these activities work on eye-hand coordination, social skills, gross motor skills and teamwork, but they kept the Starfish cool all summer long!

— *Johnetta Hurley*

Fireflies continued...

We were the authors and illustrators of books that we made. The teachers asked the kids to make up their own story.

We told them "It's your story; it could be anything you want." Then we read them in Circle Time to our friends. This activity lasted weeks and the kids are still making books in class. We take dictation and away they go with their imaginations.

Recently, we read "Strega Nona" to the class and made drawings of the magic pasta pot, and then we cooked pasta for snack! It was a big hit and we have had a lot of requests for more pasta from the magic pasta pot!

— *Joann Schock*



Don't Forget!

PIC will be CLOSED on **Monday, September 7** for Labor Day and **Tuesday, September 8** for our Teacher In-Service Day.

Staff will work together on classroom plans, take annual fire safety and emergency plan training, plus a comprehensive workshop on recognizing and reporting child abuse as part of a staff-wide professional development plan.

Calling All Scarecrows!

PIC's annual Scarecrow Festival will return on **Saturday, October 3**. Want to help? We need 4 volunteers. E-mail Director of Development Chelsea Koziara [ckozyara@parentinfantcenter.org] to get involved.



Heading to Kindergarten?

If your child will be 5 by Sept. 1, 2010, NOW is the time to start thinking about kindergarten.

Families planning to attend the Penn-Alexander School should confirm that they live in the PAS catchment area. You'll find a map in the "For Parents" section of the PAS website [<http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/schools/p/penn-alexander/for-parents>].

If you live in the city and think your neighborhood school isn't the best option, go to that school to request an application for transfer to another school within the Philadelphia system. [These forms are due in October.](#)

Many neighborhood families that do



not live in the PAS catchment area have a good relationship with the Powel School [<http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/schools/p/powel>]. We also have PIC friends whose children have attended Greenfield Elementary in Center City, St. Francis de Sales,

The Philadelphia School, Friends Select, Wissahickon and Russell Byers charter schools, Lansdowne Friends School, Media-Providence Friends, Friends' Central and Miquon School.

If you are considering an independent school, visit www.advis.org, the website for the Association of Delaware Valley Independent Schools.

When PIC receives information about school open houses, we post them on the green radiator in the main stairwell. We are planning a Kindergarten Night in late October for families whose children will be off to the Big K next September. Watch next month's Circle Time and the weekly e-newsletters for the date.

Building strong relationships @ PIC

Anyone who has spent time here at the Parent-Infant Center knows that we place great value on building a community among our families, teachers and children. Strong, caring relationships have been at the core of PIC's program for more than 30 years, so it comes as no surprise that the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) would identify "relationships" as a key standard in judging a high-quality child care program.

As part of PIC's re-accreditation process, we are examining relationships and ways to strengthen them. NAEYC identifies three key relationships that help build a quality program: relationships between teachers and families; relationships between teachers and children; and relationships among children.

NAEYC looks for programs that "promote positive relationships among all children and adults to en-



courage each child's sense of individual worth and belonging as part of a community and to foster each child's ability to contribute as a responsible community member."

In reports from our teachers inside this issue of *Circle Time* you'll find wonderful examples of the ways that teachers build strong relationships with children (working together on making books, planning sensory activities to enhance cooperation, providing positive feedback as even young babies learn what it means to

be part of a caring community).

PIC traditions, such as our potluck suppers, summer fun activities, and our extensive parent involvement opportunities, are other ways in which we build strong relationships with families.

NAEYC's teaching standard further supports the importance of building relationships by requiring programs to have "developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching approaches that enhance each child's learning and development in the context of the program's curriculum goals." Examples of the teaching standard at PIC include staff's ability to modify lesson planning based on the needs of the children or incorporating family traditions or culture into a child's daily schedule.

— Cindy Roberts & Cherie Crosby