



Windmill Creek Academy Gazette

Volume 10

Issue 8

April 2017

Letter from the Director

Dear Parents,

In like a lion and out like a lamb, March was an exciting month! The students enjoyed learning about Ireland and St. Patrick's Day, Space, Dr. Seuss, Nursery Rhymes and Fairy Tales! We look forward to April and the many themes the children will explore: "Spring," "Easter," "Life Cycle," and "Bugs & Insects."

Here are some important upcoming dates to remember and some reminders:

Thursday, April 13 Easter Egg Hunt

The students will enjoy an Easter Egg Hunt on the school's playgrounds.

School Closed Friday, April 14

Windmill Creek Academy will be closed on Friday, April 14 in observance of Good Friday.

Thursday, April 20 - Field Trip to Children's Museum of Naples (C'MON)!

The Giraffes' class will be going on their second field trip of the school year. This time we will be visiting the Children's Museum of Naples. If you've never visited the museum, we encourage you to do so! It's a great, hands-on museum for all to enjoy!

LifeTouch Picture Day - Friday, April 21st

Get ready to say, "Cheese!" LifeTouch will be here to snap Spring photographs of the children. Graduating VPK Students will also be photographed in their "Cap and Gown." More information will be forthcoming.

Looking forward to May

The VPK students will have their Graduation Ceremony on Thursday, May 11th at 7:00 p.m. and on Friday, May 12th we will have our annual "Muffins with Mom" at morning drop-off.

Lost & Found and Labeling

Please, please, please, label your children's clothes and various belongings (i.e., sippy cups, pacifiers, etc.) with both their first and last names. If the item is too small for first and last names, please indicate first name and last initial. This is a requirement from our licensing department and, of course, is vital in preventing the loss of items, spread of germs, etc.

It's hard to believe we're about to be visited by the balmy ... okay, HOT! days of summer. Let's enjoy these cooler days before the summer rains begin!

Fondly,

Janine

Janine Connell
Founder & Director
Windmill Creek Academy



Evelyn and her brother, Ben, enjoy some St. Patrick's Day fun!

Character Training

April's Character Training Values

Courage = Bravery and Determination

Tolerance = Fairness and Justice



Windmill Creek Academy Classroom Updates

Bunnies

March was a very busy month for the Bunnies! They had their first St. Patrick's Day and some of our babies enjoyed green veggies for lunch! Frances is eating pick up food and doing the "army crawl." She loves to play with Sarah. Sarah is also eating baby food now. She's standing unassisted and taking her steps with just a little help. Leighton is rolling over. She loves to smile and sit in the bumbo seat – such a happy little girl! Trip loves to drink his bottle and loves to laugh out loud – he smiles from ear to ear! Riley loves to eat her baby food and drink her bottle ... she loves to cuddle! Evelyn loves to watch her star light up in her crib. She is eating baby food and is such a happy baby with a bright smile! We'd like to welcome our newest baby, Corbin! He loves to be talked to and is learning to play with toys but when he gets the hiccups his gets quite grumpy! The Bunnies will enjoy their first Easter and what could be more fitting than our baby Bunnies enjoying Easter in their very own Bunny patch!

Ms. Iris, Ms. Kaira, Ms. Lesley & Ms. Lindsey

Cubs

In the month of March the Cubs traveled through space and learned about the solar system. For St. Patrick's day we created the Shamrock Shake and even made a four leaf clover. We sang many nursery rhymes like "Baa, Baa Black Sheep," and "Jack and Jill." For "Fairy Tales Week" we painted the "Little Red Hen" and read the "Three Billy Boats Gruff." Moving forward to April, the Cubs will be learning about Spring, have a week full of Easter fun, learn about the life cycle and also learn about "Bugs & Insects!" For Spring, the Cubs will paint the colors of the rainbow and enjoy blowing bubbles outside. During Easter Week, we will have a fun Easter Egg Hunt and hop like the Easter Bunny! When learning about the life cycle, the Cubs will learn about where flowers grown and what they need to grow – dirt, water and sunshine! We will also create a "build the caterpillar" project and will make a Lady Bug and pretend to "Buzzz" like a bumble bee! All of these projects encourage fine motor skill development, stretch the imagination and encourage the use of language and problem solving. It's great to be a Cub!

Ms. Donna, Ms. Kellie & Ms. Sofie

Bears

The month of March was *magnificent!* We made fun St. Patrick's day projects – our favorite were the rainbows made out of fruit loops and pots of gold with colorful tissue paper. These art projects encourage the development of fine motors skills as the children use their pincer grasp to pick up and manipulate the fruit loops and pieces of tissue. They also encourage a discussion of color identification and stimulate creative expression. We also had a St. Patrick's Day Party with lots of yummy treats left by some friendly leprechauns. We learned about the solar system and made planets out of shaving cream! The Bears loved hearing wonderful stories about many different nursery rhymes and singing along to the ones we know. We made a funny Humpty Dumpty project and we love to look at our project which we displayed on our classroom wall. We loved singing the rhyme, "Humpty Dumpty," too! We would like to welcome our new friend, Emma, to the Bears' Classroom. Coming up in the month of April, we are looking forward to learning about the life cycle of plants, learning

about "Bugs & Insects," and celebrating Easter and the seasons of Spring. In the middle of the month we will enjoy decorating eggs and having an Easter Egg Hunt! It is such a wonderful time and place to be a Bear!
Ms. Kayla, Ms. Kellie, Ms. Leslie, Ms. Rachel, Ms. Raquel

Frogs

The Frogs' students started the month celebrating Dr. Seuss! It is always a joy to read his books to discover his imaginative use of language and whimsical characters! We made masks depicting "The Cat in the Hat" and we even took a class picture of all of us! "Oh ... how cute we all looked!" Next, we touched upon space and enjoyed making rocket ships – picking our own colors from paint chip samples and using triangles for the top fo the rocket and trapezoids for the bottom. Sticker stars finished the project – encouraging fine motor skills. St. Patrick's week was so much fun – coloring and making our shamrocks, gluing different squares of green to learn about shades of different colors. We proudly displayed our shamrocks in our room. The Frogs also learned about different nursery rhymes including "Mary had a little lamb," and "Humpty Dumpty." We made our own Humpty Dumpty project and moved on to learning about Fairy Tales. We used our felt board to tell the story of The Three Bears in sequential order. Our project of "The Little Red Hen" taught the students about having chores and helping one another through teamwork. The students learned that with hard work they will earn rewards. The children made their own "Little Red Hens" which are displayed in the school's gallery. We look forward to next month – learning about Spring, Easter, the cycle of life using flowers, frogs and caterpillars and finally, ending the month with bugs and insects.

Ms. Carina, Ms. Jenny, Ms. Joy, Ms. Lena, Ms. Pat & Ms. Alondra

Giraffes

During the month of March, the Giraffes learned about space, sun, planets and the Earth. We started with making our space shuttle out of a big box. We worked in groups to paint and glue NASA pictures in our space station. It was also fun to learn that different planets are different colors and sizes. We also made an astronaut craft with each student's pictures and foil! During the second week of space, we talked about the characteristics of Earth – like the oceans, rivers, air and mountains. We read lots of space books to get different visuals of our solar system. Finally, we ended our space unit with pretending to eat just like astronauts do! We used zip-loc bags with yellow and laid down underneath the tables to simulate being in the space ship's cockpit. It was fun and we also took pictures! During the month of April we will be exploring about castles. We will learn about the different parts of a castle, special events at castles, people who worked in and around castles. The children will make ice castles and also learn about how a drawbridge works. Although we don't have many castles in the United States, they are plentiful in different countries and were a real part of history. In Art the Giraffes had a busy month – we made puffy paint Earths and made solar system hats. During St. Patrick's week the Giraffes had a blast playing with shaving cream slime and finding gold coins. We learned about Ireland and made the Irish flag. Shamrock puffy paint and St. Patrick's Day Bingo was also fun. During Nursery Rhyme week we made cute sheep for "Baa, Baa Black Sheep" and "Humpty Dumpty." For "Little Miss Muffet" we tried eating curds (cottage cheese) and we made a graph about how many of us like them – and who didn't! In the month of April we look forward to Spring crafts and Easter festivities. We will decorate our milk jug Easter "baskets," dye Easter Eggs and have our annual Easter Egg Hunt. In Reading, Writing and Math Readiness we have come to the end of the alphabet. We are approaching the end of VPK! For the remainder of the school year, we will review the alphabet letters and sounds. We will finish learning to write numbers to 20 and count to 31. We will also be doing end-of-the-year VPK assessments. It is amazing to see how much the class has learned and grown since August. It has been a year of non-stop learning and excitement!

Ms. Ally, Ms. Astrid, Ms. Kristen, Ms. Krystal



Ms. Lindsey April's Teacher of the Month

This month's teacher of the month is Ms. Lindsey!! Ms. Lindsey recently returned from maternity leave and returned with her handsome son, Corbin! Lindsey didn't miss a beat since her son's birth! She's back to caring for all of our wonderful Bunnies in the infant room. She has returned to creating lovely photos of our smallest students and creative artwork in the "Bunny Patch!" Lindsey is a team player and loves to help out in the school whenever and wherever she is needed. Thank you, Ms. Lindsey, for all that you do and being a great member of the Windmill Creek Academy teaching team!



April Birthdays

- Jody J - April 9
- Isabella S - April 15
- Kinley C - April 16
- Harbour M - April 18
- Mary M - April 21
- Noel Z - April 24
- Andrew M - April 27

Keep 'em Moving! Little Ones Learn Through Physical Activity

by Eliza Clark

When our kids are in constant motion, it hardly seems that we need to give more than glancing thought to their physical development and level of activity. If anything, we might sometimes wish for slightly less activity around the house. But young children's need to keep challenging themselves physically cannot be wished away, even for a day. They are working hard to train those little bodies of theirs to move and respond in all of the ways we adults take for granted, and it's more or less a full time job.

The experts call this amazing process the development of "gross motor skills," a cumbersome phrase for the control and movement of the large muscles in the body (as opposed to the "fine motor skills" that refer to ways in which children learn to perform delicate tasks with their hands). Parents tend to focus intently on these skills in the first years of babyhood when we can hardly believe our eyes as our cozy little bundles go from waving and kicking to scooting across the floor to crawling and (finally!) those eagerly awaited first steps.

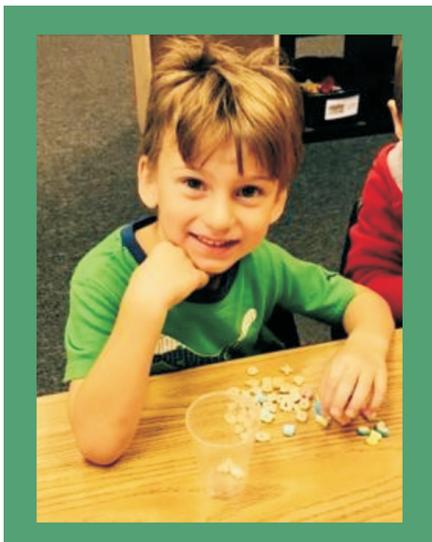
Yet once our kids are off and running, it is still important to keep up with (if at all possible) and encourage their ever more daring and independent physical feats.

Skills your preschoolers might be practicing include:

- Balance** - Standing on one foot, riding a bike, maintaining equilibrium)
- Major-muscle coordination** - Stopping and starting motion, doing somersaults, mastering the monkey bars, pumping a swing, ascending and descending stairs and ladders
- Spatial orientation** - Playing group games, fitting into different sized spaces
- Eye-hand/foot coordination** - Catching and throwing, kicking
- Using the body expressively** - Dancing, imitating, acting things out
- Laterality** - Learning right and left

If all of this sounds like a more complex breakdown of your child's playtime than you ever really cared to understand, no need to worry. All that this should tell you is that the hours upon hours you spend at the playground or in the yard or anywhere out in nature or even just dancing in the living room with your little ones are indeed hours very well spent.

Children have wonderful fun as they run and jump and play, growing their bodies and developing all of the vital connections between their bodies and minds in ways we can only begin to comprehend. But comprehend we need not. We only need to take them outside as much as possible, and feel a measure of their delight as they learn to swing themselves high high in the sky all by themselves.



Brady sorts through a project

