

Summer 2016 Newsletter



*MCC Manager: Martha Harrison
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2016 Family Program Evaluation Results

Thank you to the many parents who participated in our Annual Family Program Evaluation, completing a Survey Monkey questionnaire and giving us valuable insight on the family perspective of life here at Meriter Children's Center. 58 surveys were completed, representing 76% of Meriter Children's Center families.

Parents' List

Here are the top 5 highest comments and 5 greatest concerns identified in the survey. The "Strongly Agree" scores on those items were as follows:

Parents' 5 Highest Ranks	<i>Program Strengths</i>	% "Strongly Agree" or "Agree"
1	I feel welcomed to visit the Center at any time during the day	100%
2	I am provided with information about policies and procedures	100%
3	My child is happy & enjoys the activities, program & environment	98%
4	Classrooms are well designed, safe, clean & well maintained	98%
5	The staff is enthusiastic and professional in working with children	96%

Parents' 5 Low Ranks	<i>Opportunities for Improvements</i>	% "Strongly Agree" or "Agree"
1	The Center provides well-balanced & nutritious meals and snacks	57%
2	Tuition rates are affordable	61%
3	Staff provide me with ideas for promoting my child's development	74%
4	Staff turnover has been managed effectively, resulting in minimal impact for my child & family	77%
5	I am notified of any changes that occur within the program	84%

Action Plans for 2016/2017:

- Focus menu changes to incorporate more options for fresh fruit/vegetable and legumes, thus creating nutrition-dense meals and snacks. **See attached New Lunch Menu to be in effect starting 8/1/16 and an article below on the importance of fat in a child's diet.**
- The new menus will have a 3-color coded system to for easy visual identification of nutritional value. Green=**GO** Yellow=**SLOW** Red=**WHOA**
- Training on improving daily communication with parents will be presented at Staff Education Day meeting.
- Staff will provide Developmentally Appropriate Practice ideas to families through classroom monthly newsletters, to include any staffing assignment changes or additions **before** they occur.
- Program wide newsletters will be sent out quarterly, and include program changes with a minimum of a 30 day notice.

Fall Teaching Teams

Fall teaching teams were announced this spring but we would like to review them and take time to introduce our new teachers! For those who will be transitioning to a new room; Polliwogs, Frogs, older Chipmunks and Owls, you will be receiving more information on transitions and a welcome packet for your new classroom in August. [Check out the article attached for some great transition tips!](#)

- **Badger Room (3-5 year olds)-Mary T, Vicki, and Dawn**

The Badger Room will graduate some of their children and send them off to kindergarten and 4K. Many will also stay through the year in addition to joining our 3 year old Chipmunk & Owl friends.

- **Owl Room (2 year olds)-Holly Cl, Chris, Sharon**

The Owl room will add our current Frog friends as Sharon helps transition them upstairs. We will have between 10-11 friends each day.

- **Chipmunk Room (2 year olds)-Michelle, Trudy**

The Chipmunk room will have many 3 year olds who will transition into the Badger room . Our youngest Chipmunk friends will stay in the room.

- **Polliwog (infants)-Emily, Jodi, Holly Craig**

In September a brand new group of infants arrive to start in the Polliwog room. Our current Polliwog friends are all turning one and will move as a group to become Frogs!

- **Cub (infants)-Nicole, Wendy, TBD**

Our Cub room will keep the current group of smiling babies in here until April 2017

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- **Frog (1 year olds)-Melinda, Kristina, Danielle**

This will be home for our current Polliwogs as they move up together, and the current Frogs all hop upstairs into the two year old Owl room!

- **Bear (1 year olds)-Diane, Shalicia, Rhonda**

Our Bear room friends will hibernate (or be active one year olds!) in here until April 2017



Welcome to Bridget and Dawn!

WELCOME **Bridget Berigan!** She started in June and has been supported our infant and toddler classrooms. Bridget received her BA in Early Childhood Education w/specialization in Infant/Toddler Care from Ashford University in 2011, graduating Magna Cum Laude! She has been in the early childhood for over 28 years both in the daycare setting as well as in-home. She lives in Madison with her partner of 13+yrs, Christopher and our dog Bell and cat Ernie. Bridget has two children, Nicole (and her hubby John) and Bradley. I also am the proud Grandma of Olivia (14) and Charlie (11). I enjoy reading, watching Badger football and basketball, the Packers, soccer and attending Brad's Ultimate Frisbee games.

WELCOME **Dawn Ahrens!** Dawn is excited to be joining the Children's Center team as a teacher in the Badger Sett room. She lives in Brodhead and has been teaching in the public school systems for the past 26 years as a classroom teacher and as a reading specialist. Dawn has two adult children and enjoys spending time with them. This is a new chapter in her life and she is looking forward to the journey!

We would also like to wish **Jenny, Amber, and Andra** the best as they have left to pursue new professional and personal opportunities! They will be missed and we welcome them to visit anytime!

*If you have any questions about upcoming transitions please feel free to discuss with your teachers or Traci Adams traci.adams@unitypoint.org or 417-5258

New Tuition and Payroll Deductions

Tuition rates for the 2016/2017 school year are attached to this newsletter and will become effective **Sept. 12th**. I am pleased to announce that due to the continued increase in our enrollment, we have been able to keep our tuition increase to only **1%** this year! You will soon be receiving a new parent agreement to sign and return. Meriter employees may also sign up for payroll deduction during this time for the year. **PLEASE** advise Sue Brandenburg (susan.brandenburg@unitypoint.org) if you have signed up for TASC, **before the end of this year.**



Calendar of Events for 2016/2017 is here!

Please mark these upcoming dates on your calendar....

September

Monday, Sept. 5th CLOSED ALL DAY

Tuesday, Sept. 6th CLOSED ALL DAY

Wednesday, Sept. 15th Welcome Families Night 4:30-6:30pm

Wednesday, Sept. 21st Parent Advisory Council 4-5pm, Tower C Conference Room (Hospital cafeteria)

October

Friday, Oct. 14th CLOSED ALL DAY FOR STAFF ED. TRAINING

Meriter Children's Center Curriculum Corner:

Field Trips & Enrichment Programs

Here's the scoop on some of our latest adventures provided by the enrichment program and team...



Science with Vicki: We have loved having science outdoors! In June, we explored various seeds, bark and leaves of trees found in Lake Kegonsa State Park. In July, we concentrated on keeping weather journals for 2 weeks; it contained information such as temperature, rainfall, humidity, and weather conditions (rainy, sunny, and cloudy). In August we will explore gravity and inclines; seeing what kinds of objects will roll down inclines and how we can make them go faster or slower.

Art Studio with Rachel: Our art studio has moved outside this summer so we can enjoy the art outdoors! We've made our very own boats and tested them out in the creek. We've made kites, balloons and tried out bubble and ice cube painting. The downstairs group had a blast with water chalk art, sand slime, texture drawings, and a jello mold sensory table!

Additional Special Events included: A Bubble Works show at the Monona Terrace! A tour of Sassy Cow Creamery ...yum! Fitchburg Splash Pad to help cool us off on one of the hottest days and a cool Summer Reading Program with a story hour by Ruth from Sequoya Public Library. We will head to the Dream Park in Cottage Grove in August along with make pizzas, and explore bubbles with Anne & Sue!

Welcome to our new Parent Advisory Council (PAC) members!

Jennifer Canty-President

Amy Pawlitzke-Vice-President

Treasurer- Shannon Morrison

Secretary-Rachel Behl

Parents at Large-Liz Penner, Jill Falkowsky, OPEN Position

Next PAC meeting is: Wednesday, September 21st 4-5pm in Tower C Conference (hospital cafeteria)

Please join us, all families are welcome!

MCC Policy Corner:

Sick child pick up policy: In the event that your child needs to be picked up from school due to an illness we ask that they are picked up within 60 minutes of calling. Thanks so much for your support in keeping us all healthy!

Late fee policy:

Due to our State licensing operational requirements, the following recommendations have been suggested by the MCC-PAC group. The following Late fee policy will become effective 9/12/16 with the new school contracts:

- \$15 charge for the start of each 15 minute period beyond the child's 9.5 hour schedule.
- \$25 charge for the start of each 15 minute period after we close at 6pm.

Tornado and other Emergency Situations:

In the case of a tornado warning: Children will go to the gym and/or basement for safety. The gym was built to specifications that will withstand a tornado. In the case of an imminent threat to our building, or where we have a small group of children, everyone will be taken down to the basement which is located in the lower level of our west stairwell.

Importance of Nutrition to Early Brain Growth

Lia Stannard has been writing about women's health since 2006. She has her Bachelor of Science in neuroscience and is pursuing a doctorate in clinical health psychology.



Photo Credit Image by Flickr.com, courtesy of Raphael Goetter

Proper nutrition can help a child's brain grow. Getting the proper nutrients are essential to help a child's brain grow and develop. The National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families states that the nutrition the child gets--either through her mother's diet during pregnancy, breastfeeding or solid food--affects the size and development of her brain. The University of Washington adds that certain foods are needed during the developing years, as they contain the precursors of neurotransmitters. Without proper nutrition, the child suffers from multiple deficits.

Time Frame of Early Brain Growth

The National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families states that the time frame for early brain growth begins at mid-gestation, while the child is still in his mother's womb, and goes until age 2. The mother's diet during her pregnancy can determine the child's brain size and birth weight; if the mother does not provide enough nutrients to the child while he is in utero, his brain will not develop to its full potential. In order for the child to get enough nourishment during the pregnancy, the mother should gain an additional 20% from her ideal pre-pregnancy weight.

Breast Milk Nutrition

Breast milk provides the best nutrients for brain development, according to the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) states that breast milk contains antibodies to help a child fight infections, plus "digestive proteins, minerals, vitamins and hormones." At six months, children will start to receive iron supplementation from the breast milk. If a child is being bottle-fed, formula with iron supplements are recommended, as an iron deficiency can cause cognitive deficits.

Fats for Myelination

Another importance of nutrition to early brain growth is myelination, which is the formation of myelin around the axon of the neuron. The myelin speeds up neural signals and protects the integrity of the signals, preventing a breakdown in strength when carried down the neuron. Because myelination occurs rapidly during a child's early years, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families recommends a high level of fat in her diet, about 50 % of total calories. This can be found in breast milk, although a child can be given whole milk at age 1. When a child reaches age 2, the amount of fat should be reduced to 30%.

Precursors for Neurotransmitters

Specific foods contain the precursors for neurotransmitters, which are essential for communication in the brain and with the rest of the body; without these precursors, children can suffer from neurological problems or mood disorders. Some of the neurotransmitters that rely on precursors found in food are norepinephrine, serotonin, dopamine, glutamate, acetylcholine and aspartate, according to the University of Washington. Examples of precursor-rich foods are eggs, milk, meat and potatoes.

Dangers of Malnutrition

Serious consequences can occur if children do not get enough nutrition. The National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families states that malnourished children have smaller brains due to a "reduced dendritic growth, reduced myelination and the production of fewer glia." The smaller size can result in behavioral and cognitive problems, which can impede a child's performance in school.

New Tuition Rates for 2016/2017 School Year

Meriter Employees Tuition Rates
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Meriter Community Rates Premium Tuition Rates
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2016/2017

OPTION A - Full Time Enrollment		
	Weekly	Biweekly
Polli,Cub	\$ 377.00	\$ 754.00
Frog,Bear	\$ 365.00	\$ 730.00
Chip, Owl	\$ 322.00	\$ 644.00
Badger	\$ 305.00	\$ 610.00

OPTION A - Full Time Enrollment		
	Weekly	Biweekly
	\$ 410.00	\$ 820.00
	\$ 397.00	\$ 794.00
	\$ 350.00	\$ 700.00
	\$ 331.00	\$ 662.00

OPTION B - PT, Fixed Schedule		
	Full Day	Half Day
Polli,Cub	\$ 98.00	\$ 59.00
Frog,Bear	\$ 85.00	\$ 57.00
Chip, Owl	\$ 84.00	\$ 50.00
Badger	\$ 79.00	\$ 47.00

OPTION B - PT, Fixed Schedule		
	Full Day	Half Day
	\$ 106.00	\$ 64.00
	\$ 103.00	\$ 62.00
	\$ 91.00	\$ 55.00
	\$ 87.00	\$ 52.00

DROP-IN CHILD CARE	
Hourly (up to 5 hours)	\$ 10.00
Half Day (5 hours)	\$ 50.00
Daily (5+ to 9.5 hours)	\$ 100.00

DROP-IN CHILD CARE	
Hourly (up to 5 hours)	\$ 15.00
Half Day (5 hours)	\$ 75.00
Daily (5+ to 9.5 hours)	\$ 150.00

Infant Rooms: Polliwog, Cub

Toddler Rooms: Frog, Bear

Twos Rooms: Chipmunk, Owl

Preschool Rooms: Badger

Minimum Enrollment is .4 fte biweekly
*Attendance is limited to a 9.5 hour day

Full Day is attendance 5+ to 9.5 hours
Half Day is attendance 5 hours or less

*A **Late Fee** will be charged for pick up times after scheduled attendance hours or after 6pm.

A **Sibling Tuition Discount** of 10% will be applied to the oldest child(ren)'s tuition

A Non-Refundable **Registration Fee** of \$75.00 is required for enrollment (\$20.00 for Drop-In)

A Non-Refundable \$225 **Tuition Deposit** (applicable towards first months' tuition)

A **"Hold" Tuition Fee** of \$250 Biweekly is required to hold an opening beyond 3 weeks

For information on child care expense savings through **Meriter's Flexible Spending Account** (pretax deductions for dependant care), contact Patti Ripp in Human Resources, x76837.

For information on **Financial Assistance** for child care tuition contact:

WI Shares Program/Dane Co. Jobs Center (242-7441)

City of Madison Office of Community Services (266-6520)

UWChild Care Tuition Assistance Office (265-9662)

NEW RATES EFFECTIVE September 12th, 2016

I LOVE YOU RITUALS

Fun Activities for Parents and Children That:

- Boost brain potential
- Encourage cooperation and caring
- Promote learning and literacy
- Increase attention and decrease power struggles
- Build bonds of unconditional love

BECKY A. BAILEY, PH.D.
AUTHOR OF *EASY TO LOVE, DIFFICULT TO DISCIPLINE*

Try this "I love you ritual"....

Hello, Toes/Good-bye, Toes

Preparation and Instructions: This game is wonderful to play while dressing or undressing your child. Take off the child's shoes and socks.

The Game: Once the shoes and socks are off the child's feet, bring one of the child's feet close to your face or move your face close to the child's foot and say "Hello, toes." At this point, you could look at them, blow on them, count them, touch them or nibble at them. Quickly say, "Good-bye, toes" and hide the toes from your sight. Then begin with a hide and seek dialogue. "Where did those toes go? I just had them in my hand. They were so lovely. Now I have lost them. Oh dear, what will I do? Maybe I put them here." (Search for the feet all over the child.) You can then do the same with your child's hand and say "Hello, hand" or other body parts.