

CCC Newsletter

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The mission of Concord Children's Center is to cultivate an intimate, welcoming community where children develop respectful relationships and inquisitive minds, build confidence in their individual gifts, and are engaged, prepared and inspired to learn.

2010 Auction - News

Auction Co-Chairs!

We are thrilled to announce that Linda Vittum, West Concord Parent and Jane Torpie, Alumni Parent; will be chairing the 2010 Auction. Jane is a Development Committee Co-chair, has chaired a previous auction, and chaired last years Set-up Committee.



Jane's skillful use of Roller Skates was an inspiration to all of us who helped on Friday and Saturday last year.

Linda has participated on the Decorations committee for the last several Auctions and headed up the Concord Bookshop fundraiser this year. We look forward to another great auction Thank-you Linda and Jane!

Decorations Committee Meeting

Everyone is invited to join the Decorations Committee when they meet on Tuesday January 26 at 7 PM at 1300 Main Street. For more information please contact:

Jennifer Newbold at jnewbold@comcast.net or Heather Bout at heather@rolphotography.com.



CCC Wish List

A Simple Fax machine



Our Fax machine has just been put to rest. Thanks to Gary Berlam for trying to fix it. It was pronounced unfixable on Thursday and we are looking for a replacement.

Desktop or Laptop Computers

Donated PCs that bear the label "Designed For Windows XP" or "Designed For Windows Vista" would be greatly appreciated. To donate please contact Pat Nelson at 978-369-3747 or executive@concordchildrenscenter.org.



CCC January/February Calendar

January 25	Decorations Committee meeting
January 29	2009-2010 Applications Due
February 11	Picture day
February 10	Board Meeting at West Concord 7:30
February 15	Closed- Presidents' Day
February 16-19	February Optional Days
February 26	Picture day Ripley & Emerson

CCC's Playground Philosophy

The following is an excerpt from a Guest Commentary, written by Pat Nelson CCC Executive Director, that appeared in the January 21 issue of the Concord Journal.

At our school in West Concord we are often asked about our playground: where are the swings, the slide the monkey bars – wouldn't we like a climbing toy, shouldn't we fill our open space with traditional



playground equipment? With children outside on our playground all year we are incapable of sustaining much of a lawn and some have suggested covering the playground with artificial grass or other playground surfaces. Our answer is no, not here. It is not that we disapprove of traditional playgrounds – we remember them fondly from

our own childhoods and we know that children delight in many aspects of traditional play equipment. There is definitely a place for swings, and slides, and monkey bars in the life of the young child; however we, along with many other pre-school programs, have made a very deliberate decision to use our outdoor play spaces in a different way. Our view of the optimal play environment for our children comes from decades of observation by our educators on how children use our playgrounds to learn the skills and abilities we wish to see developing in early childhood. We also have been influenced by the growing body of scientific evidence

that highlights the strong relationship between the time children have access to unstructured play in the natural world and their ability to learn and develop verbal and social skills. Research has pointed to how play in these natural environments promotes emotional and physical health, positively affecting levels of stress and cognitive functioning.



Mary Rivkin, in her book, *The Great Outdoors, Restoring Children's Right To Play Outside*, notes that "Children's access to outdoor play has evaporated like water in sunshine."

Even in beautiful towns like Concord, filled with conservation land and open space, children may have limited access to playful experiences in nature. Concerns about sun exposure, insect carrying diseases, stranger danger, and pollution have created a culture of fear that has limited children's opportunities for free play outdoors. In our towns we know many children spend time outdoors in organized sports, however it is the free, playful interaction with nature that seems to have the greatest benefit for children.

Developing safe places for children to interact freely with nature is the purpose of what is called the "natural playscape". ...Researchers in Europe have found that playgrounds built with and in the natural environment are more effective in



developing fitness, balance, and coordination. The traditional American playground emphasizes equipment designed to promote physical development. For very young children these traditional playgrounds, often placed on flat expanses of pavement, do not encourage other aspects of growth and favor children with high levels of physical skill, often leaving other children on the sidelines.

What we have seen on our playgrounds at Concord Children's Center, that include gardens, open space, and a hill for rolling, sliding, and tumbling; is that children play for



longer periods of time, they engage in more imaginative play, they interact and problem solve together as they build in the sand area or create games and worlds of their own using natural objects, through play. They move almost constantly using the paths or open space for running. There is less competition and more cooperative play....

Picture Days

February 11
@ West Concord

February 26
@ Ripley and Emerson



If your child does not regularly attend school on these dates you may contact your program Director to arrange for him/her to be present for the picture taking.

Bedford Pre-School Open House

Monday January 25th. Concord Children's Center will host a table at the Bedford Family Connection's Pre-School Open House. Please invite your friends and family who may be looking for childcare or a pre-school program, to join us at our table. The fair takes place from 7 – 9PM at 12 Mudge Way in Bedford. We will be sharing information about Concord Children's Center and the parent support programs at First Connections.

March Professional Days

Concord Children's Center will be closed on March 11 and 12 for Teacher Professional Days. On Thursday our teachers will be attending a full day conference sponsored by the Center for Parents and Teachers. The conference features Wheelock College Professor, Dr. Leland Clarke, who will address the importance of the role of the early childhood educator in the lives of young children. Friday will be spent in center wide meetings and classroom activities.

First Connections Announcements

First Connections is a non-profit organization that provides programs and services to families with children birth to three. The office is located in the Community Agencies building at Emerson Hospital. If you would like to be on an email list to receive their newsletter please contact Linda lmatthews@jri.org.

The First Connections Winter newsletter is now available online @ <http://www.jri.org/firstConnections/Publications-Newsletter.php>

Upcoming First Connections Programs

- 8 Part Raising Challenging Children Workshop Begins March 29th
- Thursday February 4th Setting Tables Setting Limits Seminar

To register for programs or for more information contact Linda lmatthews@jri.org or call 978-287-0221