

Mansfield Children's Center ~ News & Notes ~ Fall 2012

Center News



Special Event Food Policy

In order to safeguard the health of the children in our care who have food allergies or food sensitivities, we are asking parents not to send in any food items for groups to share (on special occasions, holidays, birthdays, last days, etc). You may consult with your child's teacher for an alternative if you would like to send something in from home for the children to share on a particular occasion.

Our health policy requiring children with food allergies or sensitivities to be served only food from home is clear and easy to follow. We appreciate parents' continued cooperation with this by sending two snacks in the child's lunch box daily.

Fall Enrollment and Groups

We are so pleased to have your families with us. This fall we have a larger number of younger children in our groups than we typically do at this time of year. We have been making adjustments school wide to accommodate the needs of all children in our care. We will continue to enroll families who wish to join us and we appreciate, as always, your recommending Mansfield Children's Center to family and friends who may be looking for daycare.

Parent Participation

It was wonderful to have so many of you join us this summer for the Arts Festival. We are in the process of planning more events and opportunities for parents to be part of the program throughout the year.

An evening Parent Meeting has been scheduled for parents of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (Infant Room through Block Room) for Wednesday, October 10, 2012 at 6:30 pm. We will start the meeting in the Block Room by viewing the MCC video. Parents will then join their child's teacher in their classroom for a short presentation and discussion. Please RSVP for the meeting in your child's classroom. We hope to see all of you there.



PreK1 Parent Meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, October 18, 2012 at 6:30 pm.

Classroom Notes

Butterfly Curriculum Activity Update

Mansfield Children's Center's Butterfly Curriculum has been a school-wide project that has involved all children, infants through school age, families, and staff. Through this program, the children are building skills in academic areas such as science, math, literacy, the arts, and in social/emotional areas such as cooperation, self control, responsibility, and follow through.

Last fall the Butterfly Curriculum development group, led by Director Jeanne Fallon, initiated an overwintering program. Every staff person was given a chrysalis of a Tiger Swallowtail, a Spicebush Swallowtail, or a Luna Moth, to care for over the course of the winter. In spring, we moved the chrysalises to habitats in the classroom to watch them emerge.



In the spring and summer, all of the groups participated in butterfly-related activities. The infants had six chrysalises from the overwintering project and of the six, five emerged and were transferred to the Atrium.

The results were similarly good school wide and we started the spring with many home grown tiger swallowtails, spicebush swallowtails, and Luna Moths to release from the Atrium into the yard.

The toddlers raised quite a few monarch butterflies in the classroom. The teachers found caterpillars on the milkweed plants in the yard and put them into a habitat in the toddler

classroom. Teachers and children fed them and watched them grow daily. They watched them climb to the top of the habitat to form their chrysalises. The toddlers observed the butterflies as they emerged from the chrysalises and then released the butterflies into the Atrium.

At one point in the summer there were thirteen butterflies in the Atrium and six of them had come from the toddler classroom. The toddlers all had turns visiting the Atrium to see the monarchs fly. Through this activity the toddlers learned about the butterfly lifecycle, they learned a lot of new vocabulary words, and they learned about responsibility and follow through as they fed and cared for the caterpillars daily.

The young preschoolers used the Sunflower House outdoor classroom area for their butterfly and insect observation activities. They measured and observed the sunflowers as they grew throughout the summer and practiced writing numbers by recording their measurement data. They also painted pictures of the sunflowers, incorporating observation and art activities into their lessons. They talked about the butterflies and insects they saw visiting the sunflowers.



The PreK1 groups began their summer with an introduction to the Butterfly Atrium where they learned about many different types of butterflies and moths. They began an adoption program and many children volunteered to care for different kinds of caterpillars over the weekend at home. In order to prepare for this, the children learned how to keep the habitats clean and how to provide the right kind of food and water for the caterpillar. They learned to identify and locate each caterpillar's host plant so that they could provide the caterpillar with the right leaves for food and stick for the chrysalis to attach to. The children were very excited to share what they are learning here about butterflies with their families at home.



The PreK1 groups reinforced what they are learning here about butterflies during their visit to the Science Museum in Boston where they spent time in the butterfly garden.

The School-agers visited the Atrium daily to water and care for the plants there and to be sure that the butterflies in the Atrium had water. They attempted to raise three monarch butterflies without success so that was an occasion for discussion and learning about what should be done differently next time. They used their field trip to The Butterfly Place in western Massachusetts as an opportunity to learn about different kinds of butterflies and to do some photography while they were there.



Arts Festival 2012

We were pleased to have so many families here for our 2012 Arts Festival. The weather was great, the entertainment lively, and as usual, the children are thrilled to have their families here for the day.

The children learn so much about cooperation, responsibility, follow through, and risk taking as they practice and prepare their plays for the Festival. This year the School-Agers presented a reprisal of *The Lorax*, but made it a musical this time with songs and hip-hop dances that were composed and choreographed by our summer staff. The production featured the youngest of our preschoolers.



Field Day 2012

Ashley Fallon once again brought the whole school outside together for a morning of challenging physical events during the Second Annual Field Day. Teams, consisting of teachers, school agers, preschoolers, and toddlers, moved through various field events. They ran the obstacle course and a relay race, ran a downhill wagon race, competed in a Lego building challenge, played charades, and participated in a butterfly release. The school agers helped the younger children as the younger children challenged themselves in these events.

