

A Wonderful Back-to-School Transition

New Gillen Brewer students and returning students completed a wonderfully smooth transition into the Tadpoles room.

The first few weeks of the pre-school program were spent allowing children (and teachers) to get to know one another. Morning Meeting, when the entire class congregates, as “getting to know you” time, as well as a time to get to see how our classroom functions. The children have developed a familiarity with their peers’ names through the use of letter links. Daily letter link games and songs are included in morning meeting throughout the week encouraging the children to call one another, as well as the teachers, by name. Each day we take attendance using the letter links. We count the number of children present at school

and those who are absent.

The children have grown accustomed to the class schedule and routines. As they grow more familiar with the visual cues used on the daily schedule, they are able to identify various activities and follow along throughout the day. Several children have volunteered to be “schedule readers” at morning meeting, announcing the schedule to the rest of the Tadpoles. The daily schedule not only allows them to prepare for transitions, but also helps to develop an initial understanding of time.

The calendar is also a popular time at morning meeting. The Tadpoles love to sing the “days of the week” song and identify which day of the week it is. Using the “home” and “school” visual cues placed next to each day of the week, the children are beginning to understand how the week is cyclical. Using “home” and



Julian, Hannah and Harry sing at Morning Meeting.



Marley, Keba and Troy “move their chins” during a movement song.

“school” visuals to label the days of the week also helps to prepare them for days off from school, such as this past Monday.

Curriculum Night: Parents Playing Like Their Kids!

Kudos to all of the parents who made it out to curriculum night! Not only did the evening serve as an informational session regarding the curriculum for the child’s upcoming school year, but it was also a time to “play”. Thanks to all parents who so eagerly participated during the “work time” part of curriculum night. The children got a kick out of seeing pictures of the moms and dads playing with the toys they use in class every day. Our goal was to gain a better understanding of what we look for through play and the importance of play in our curriculum.

We suggest that parents take a look at the list of High/Scope key experiences placed in the parent folder while watching your child play at home. It is interesting to note the areas of growth through observation of their play!



Hannah’s Mom plays with the dollhouse people.



Julian’s Mom feeds the baby.



Harry’s Mom plays with the Legos.



Marley’s parents play in the pretend area.



Coming Soon: ASPCA to The Tadpoles Room!

In the upcoming weeks, the Tadpoles will be studying house pets. So far, we've been busy differentiating animals that we can classify as house pets, and those we can't. We've defined house pets as animals that can live in a home, and need to be cared for by people. We've also begun to talk about the basic needs of pets: food, water, shelter and exercise (for some). Several of the children in the class have various kinds of pets and have volunteered information about these animals. We will be creating a special bulletin board for children to bring in pictures of their own pets, or pets of neighbors and family that they are familiar with.

We encourage families to send in pictures of their own animals, or animals their child may be familiar with to place on our board. Additionally, we will be asking children to bring in a stuffed "pet" from home to care for at school. Details will follow soon!

To supplement our house pets unit, we will be having weekly visits from trained dogs and their owners from the ASPCA. As part of our work with these dogs, we will be participating in the ASPCA's dog bite prevention program. Because our children experience contact with dogs on the streets of our city daily, we felt learning a set of rules to follow when encountering dogs would be a valuable skill.

We hope that visits with the dogs will be a wonderful sensory experience as well as educational!

Lily (left) and Mr. G will be visiting us with their owners in October.



OT Corner: Hands Time with the Tadpoles

We have started off this school year with a bang! This year, we are participating in Hands Time, conducted with our OT, Gina. This is a multi-sensory approach to handwriting using materials and concepts from the Handwriting Without Tears curriculum. We are focusing on the foundations of handwriting by getting familiar with the lines that form the letters of

the alphabet. So far, we have learned "big lines" and "little lines", as well as "big curves" and "little curves". We are on our way to making different shapes and designs with these lines and curves. When we've mastered this, we will be on our way to making letters. It's been a very exciting start to the school year and we can't wait for what's ahead!



Gina and Tadpoles go over the directions to make Gak. The children worked with the Gak to build hand strength.

Work Time in The Tadpoles Pond!



We've had a wonderful time exploring the new toys and materials in the Tadpoles Room-take a look at us at play!