From the Desk of the Director
by Dr. Mandy Medvin  (email: medvinm@westminster.edu)

Welcome back! In this newsletter our teachers focus on curriculum, and the use of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) in our classroom. These curricular approaches are endorsed by our accrediting agency (the National Association for the Education of Young Children), and are a hallmark of high quality early childhood programs. Some key ideas behind DAP are: (a) children are active learners, and benefit most by a ‘hands on’ approach to learning, (b) play is extremely motivating, and enhances development in cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical domains (c) teachers provide enriched environments with many different learning experiences (d) assessment of identified goals and skills is an integral part of the curriculum. For additional information, the NAEYC publication on developmentally appropriate practice is at:

https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/dap

M/W/F Class Head Teacher's Notes
by Debi Roud  (email: roudds@westminster.edu)

Welcome back! We hope you and your families had an enjoyable and relaxing holiday. We are glad to resume our routine and are ready to start the New Year off with lots of exciting activities.

We’d like to thank the many guest speakers who contributed to our Circle Time in December. The month was full of interesting customs, traditions, music and foods from other countries. We began our month by reading the book Children around the World and introducing the class to all the different countries around the world. College student Alyssa Peters shared some of her families interesting German traditions with the children and talked about how her family celebrates Christmas. Gloria Stumpf was kind enough to come into preschool and share how the country of France celebrates Christmas with Pere Noel. We even

(See M/W/F continued on page 2)

T/Th Class Teacher's Notes
by Melissa Moore  (email: mooreml@westminster.edu)

Happy New Year and welcome back! We hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday break. Our month of December was informative and fun thanks to our guest speakers at circle time! Our theme for December was family holiday traditions. Thank you Gina Carrier and Melinda Perttu for coming into our classroom to be one of our guest speakers this month. We truly appreciate your time and efforts! We had a blast during our Polar Express Day! We all wore pajamas and enjoyed a morning full of Polar Express games, snacks, songs, and crafts.

This semester we will focus more on your child’s development. Now that we are familiar

(See T/Th continued on page 3)
learned a few new words in French! College student Didi Kumalo introduced to the preschool children her families South African holiday celebrations. Christmas is celebrated throughout the African continent by Christian communities large and small. On Christmas day, carols are sung, meats are roasted, gifts are exchanged and family visits made. Ali DuBois came to preschool and talked about her trip to England. The people in England celebrate Christmas with Father Christmas who carries presents to children on a donkey! She showed the children many pictures of what England looks like... Big Ben and castles being the favorites! Mandy Medvin talked to the class about Israel. The children enjoyed listening to the Hanukkah story, looking at the menorah and counting candles, and spinning like dreidels! Jeff Bersett visited our classroom to teach the children some of the many customs that are celebrated in Spain around the Christmas holiday. Last but certainly not least, Julie Mohr talked about the Christmas story and the birth of Jesus Christ. The Christmas story was read and then later in the day the children played a game using the nativity set. Thank you everyone!

This semester marks a more focused, individual approach to your child’s development. Now that we are familiar with your child’s abilities and development, we will be providing more opportunities for challenges that are individually appropriate. It is exciting to see how your preschoolers grow, develop and acquire new skills daily!

Some of you have voiced some concern that perhaps your child was not yet interested in the alphabet or numbers. All children grow in different stages and will become "ready" for those skills at different times. What we do at the Preschool Lab is provide a developmentally appropriate classroom. It provides many experiences that enhance learning skills in a way that is in-tuned with children’s characteristics. You may have noticed there are usually lots of play, noise, hands-on projects, and open-ended explorations going on. This is all part of the learning environment for a four and five-year-old. Children need lots of direct interactive experiences and through those experiences, children are building a solid structure for the letter and number writing or “sit down” paper work that they will be doing in the future.

Here are a few examples of how you’re four or five-year-old preschooler is learning cognitive skills:

- When counting, sorting, classifying and measuring with food at snack and cooking time;
- When imitating sounds and reading words as the star chart and stories are being read and written;
- When telling a teacher or peer about an art project or story just created;
- When corresponding letters with sounds during Show and Tell sharing time;
- When using interactive iPad or computer games that encourages critical thinking skills;
- When playing in the dramatic play area or block area with peers that stimulates language, social cooperation, and problem-solving skills;
- When creating at the “free art table” by way of “written” stories, lists, recipes or letters;
- When manipulating materials and equipment such as puzzles, interlocking toys and play-doh that require fine/perceptual motor dexterity.

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**Recipe: Snowball Snack**

- 6 cups Rice Krispie cereal
- 1 bag miniature marshmallows
- 3 TBLS butter
- 1 cup confectioners sugar

Melt the marshmallows and butter in a large saucepan over low heat. Remove from heat and add cereal, stirring until all the cereal is well-coated. Butter your hands and form mixture into 3” balls. Place the balls in a plastic zip-lock bag with confectioners sugar. Toss and coat to make a yummy snowball!

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Beginning January 16th and 17th Ashley Stubbs (M/W/F) and Rachael Huff-Elliott (T/TH) will be the college aides for the spring semester. Ashley has had previous experience with children and Rachael of course, was the college aide last semester and the children love her! Both are looking forward to their preschool experiences this semester!
with your child’s abilities and development, we will be providing more opportunities for challenges that are individually appropriate. It is an exciting step when we see each preschooler grow with the new skills that they acquire each day.

Have you ever heard someone remark about a preschool, “The children aren’t learning anything. All they do is play?” We strongly believe the best learning is active learning. Children learn through exploration and play. Children play in many ways. They play independently, sometimes near each other but with each child engrossed in his own activity. They engage in what is called “parallel play”, perhaps using each others’ toys or even talking, but not coordinating their play. They also play cooperatively, organizing roles and situations for group play. As they get older, children are capable of more cooperative, coordinated play but all kinds of play are valuable.

When kids play with each other, they learn to see other children’s points of view and begin to become more empathic and caring. They begin to understand customs and rules and appreciate those of others. Children also learn to use language in new ways to describe their play and to interact with others. And in play, children develop their muscles and coordination.

Adults can support children’s play by providing: lots of time to play, lots of safe play spaces, endless opportunities and simple, interesting materials. No new, expensive, state-of-the-art gadgets are required. Kids are experts at play and can take it from there!

(T/Th continued from page 1)

Happy New Year
(sung to the tune of “Where is Thumbkin”)

Happy New Year, Happy New Year
Celebrate! Celebrate!
Goodbye to the old year
Hello to the New Year.
2018! 2018!

The Shape Song
(sung to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

Rectangle, Circle
Triangle, Square.
I can be found anywhere!
On a hat
On a house
Even on a little mouse.
Rectangle, Circle,
Triangle, Square.
I can be found anywhere!

Please feel free to tell us what you would like to see at the preschool. We welcome your suggestions and ideas!! Give us articles to put on the bulletin board, suggest any computer games your family enjoys, and suggest a field trip idea you might have. You enhance the program!
HIGHLIGHTS-M/W/F CLASS:

Happy New Year!
New Year Celebration—We will ring in the New Year with a musical parade, party hats and our new Year resolutions.

Winter
After introducing the season of winter, we’ll be discussing the properties of snow, water and ice, and doing some classroom experiments with them. Diffusion, freezing, and melting points are just a few of science terms we will be learning about. Brain-storming about animals that would rather sleep the winter season away will end our wintery week.

Martin Luther King Day
We will be celebrating the day by making symbols of peace and talking about how everyone, no matter how different, can get along and be friends.

White Day and Sled Riding Day
Remember to dress your child in white and wear something warm on Friday, January 19. Weather permitting, we will be outside sledding down the hill near the Amphitheater!

Book Week
This week in January will be all about books! Some of the highlighted books are The Gingerbread Man, Stone Soup, The Mitten and It Looks Like Spilt Milk. All art projects, cooking projects, and language experience stories will focus around these books!

All Tied Up!
This class loves things that can be tied! Throughout this fun day we will lace with lace boards, make ribbon hoops for gym class and create some wonderful string art.

HIGHLIGHTS-T/TH CLASS:

Welcome Back!
The class will celebrate a new semester and year with horns, hats and confetti!

Winter
A new season is here! We will start our day with a circle time discussing winter. What do we see, feel, and hear? Do we like winter? What are some fun activities we can do during this season? Our day will also include some winter cardinal bird art. Look for some winter quotes from the children in our classroom.

Friendship Day
Your children will be learning about Martin Luther King and how he taught us to love one another regardless of who we are or what we look like. The children will be engaging in many activities teaching them how to be a good friend to all. Some group collage art work, cooperative block play, and language activities are planned. We will also be reading The Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister. Cooperation and using kind words will be the focus of these days.

Penguins
We will spend a day talking about this fun winter bird. The children will become familiar with different types of penguins, where they live, and what they eat. We will practice walking and sounding like penguins during penguin games.

Sled Riding Day and White Day
Remember to dress your child in white and wear something warm on Thursday, January 18th. Weather permitting; we’ll be outside sledding down the hill near the Amphitheater! Afterwards we will warm up with some hot chocolate and graham crackers. We would love for you to join us! Your help is always appreciated!

January Websites
http://pbskids.org/holidays/
http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/
http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/scienceforkids/seasons/seasons.htm
Love the way the children would touch Mrs. Moore’s tummy!

What other classroom can say they have Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches as pets?!

The children loved dreidel play in December!
PICTURE PAGES

Jonas and Davey hard at work!

Peyton painting a picture for Mom and Dad!

Annika and Zachary hunting for animals in the sandbox!