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 be- 
hind 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 differ- 
ent 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 Melissa Moore  (email: mooreml@westminster.edu)  
Welcome back! We hope you and your families had an enjoyable and relaxing holi- 
day. 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 guest speakers who contributed to our Circle Time in December. The month was full of interesting customs, traditions, and music.  
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 concern that perhaps your child was not yet interested in the  
(See M/W/F continued on page 2)

T/Th Class Teacher's Notes  
by Jen Matyasovsky  (email: matyasja@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 who came in to share with us their family traditions! Thanks you guests speakers! 
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 
with your child’s abilities and development, we will be providing more opportunities for chal- 
lenges that are individually appropriate. It is an exciting step when we see each preschooler  
(See T/Th continued on page 3)
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.

Recipe: Snowball Snack

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!

Beginning January 17th and 18th Anna Brock (M/W/F) and Samantha Dubetz (T/TH) will be the college aides for the spring semester. Anna and Samantha have both volunteered in the preschool and are looking forward to their preschool experiences this semester!
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 other’s 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!

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 our new Year resolutions.

Winter / Arctic Ice
After introducing the season of winter, we’ll be discussing the properties of snow, water and ice, and doing some classroom experiments. Diffusion, freezing, and melting points are just a few of science terms we will be learning about.

White Day
Remember to dress your child in white on Friday, January 11th!

Snow Play Day
Bring all your child’s “snow gear” on Friday, January 25th for a fun day of playing and sledding outside on our playground. Also, please sign-up to help if you’re able.

Snowmen
We will spend these cold winter days reading and learning about snowmen. Snowmen at Night and Snowballs are a few of the books we will read together. Look for our snowmen art and language activities around the classroom.

Polar Bears
These arctic animals will be our focus at the end of January. We will learn about where polar bears live, what they eat, and what things they can and cannot do. We will incorporate lots of science activities including making a life size polar bear and testing out “blubber.”

HIGHLIGHTS-T/TH CLASS:

Welcome Back!
The class will get back into our routine with a review of class rules and expectations. The will share a new toy that they received from Santa during show-n-tell.

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.

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.

Snow Play Day
Bring your child’s snow gear for playing outside. Hopefully we will have snow to make a snowman, snow angels, and sledding on our playground. We would love for you to join us! Your help is always appreciated!

White Day
Remember to wear white on Tues. Jan. 29th.

Winter Animals
A time to learn about what animals are doing this time of year. We will be making bird feeders and learning about animals that hibernate.

January Websites
http://pbskids.org/holidays/
http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/
http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/
scienceforkids/seasons/seasons.htm