



PANDAS PLANET

Issue No. 11

July 2007

Highlights

June was a nice summer kick off in the Pandas room. We talked about vacation plans and shared stories of the trips we have taken. We went camping and to the beach in home living. A big interest in puppies prompted a vet hospital in dramatic play as well. As the end of the month came around, the children grew very interested in writing and giving letters to friends and family members. We will be expanding on this interest as we enter the month of July. As we near the end of the month, we will begin visiting the Field Mice room in order to prepare the Pandas for their coming transition.

Developmental Milestones

Supporting Children Through Change

There are at least two kinds of transitions in young children's experience:

- 1) Major transitions, such as children entering preschool or moving from one classroom to another.
- 2) Moving from one segment or part of the day to another.

For all of us, beginnings and endings are significant. They often have a heady mix of conflicting feelings attached to them: anticipation, excitement, insecurity, sadness and loss, and a bit of fear of the unknown. So it is with children. When children begin participating in a children's service, or are faced with any other major change to their daily experience, these big transitions need attention. Obviously the particular ways of dealing with them will depend on the age of the child and the circumstances, but some general points can be made that apply to all age groups:

- Do them as gently as possible, incrementally if possible. The "throw them in at the deep end" approach hardly ever, if ever, works well in helping children settle in to a new experience. Avoid all or nothing. Incremental changes are often better than sudden abrupt ones.
- Spending small amounts of time in a new place make it easier to become accustomed to it.
- Rituals help. For example, being held by someone familiar and seeing Mummy through the door, or waving goodbye and watching through a window as Dad goes through the gate to his car can make it easier. Routines and rituals give comfort through providing security and predictability.
- Taking something familiar into the unfamiliar is comforting. Maybe it's a loved blanket from home or going for visits to the new place with a familiar and loved friend or family member -- the familiar and comfortable help all of us adjust to the new and unfamiliar.
- Don't pre-judge; rather be an astute observer of your child. Try to find out how he or she is feeling. In many situations it is helpful if we "put ourselves in their shoes", but at the same time we shouldn't automatically presume to know how children feel in a particular situation. We must be tuned into them to find out.
- Be empathetic. Give time, give encouragement, give support. It takes all of us time to adjust. It takes some of us longer than others.

Though a big change is coming, we will be working with the Pandas to make sure it is as smooth a transition as possible. We will give the children many chances to become more familiar with their classroom to be. We will answer the children's questions and engage them in discussions about what they can expect in their new room. Of course, as always, we are here to answer any questions you may have as well.

Birthdays

No birthdays



Class Notes

Conference Time - The sign up sheet for our end of the year conferences has been posted. Please sign up if you have not already if any special arrangements need to be made just let me know

Transitioning to Field Mice - As we near the end of July, the Pandas will begin visiting the Field Mice room for a few hours each week. They will have an opportunity to explore and get acquainted with the classroom they will soon be calling theirs. We will keep you posted.

Home Visits - The new school year is just around the corner and I will be conducting home visits for the children who will be going into the Field Mice room. Since I will be making the upcoming transition with the Pandas, the home visit is even more optional for you than usual. I will post a preliminary sign up sheet to find out how many of you are interested in having one prior to coming up with a definite sign up schedule.

Activity

Materials you will need:

Mini Ocean

1. Plastic liter bottle
2. Blue food coloring
3. Cooking oil

Steps:

1. Fill a clear plastic liter bottle 3/4 full with water
2. Add blue food coloring then add cooking oil (Leave about 1 inch at the top of the bottle)
3. Show preschool children how the oil and water do not mix. Tilting the bottle back and forth causes a wave effect.