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Lead teacher Sabrina Mendoza, lead teacher in the Kangaroo's room, is 24 years old, and was born and raised in Plano, TX. She moved to Austin in 2002 to attend The University of Texas at Austin, and graduated in 2006 with a Bachelor in Human Development and Family Science with a focus in Early Childhood Development. She began working at Child's Day in the fall of 2006. Sabrina loves to workout. She is left-handed, but golf righty.

Ashley Spillman, assistant teacher in the Kangaroo's room, is 25 years old, and she just moved from Monroe, Louisiana to Austin upon completing her Associates degree in Early Childhood Education at Delta Community College. She is originally from Natchitoches, LA and is the youngest of 4 children. Her favorite movie is *A League of Their Own*. She is currently learning how to whistle.

BRINGING SCIENCE HOME

Hold a mini science workshop in your house! Every family can be a science team if you use these quick and easy ways to enjoy science explorations at home:

- You don't have to be a scientist to "do" science at home. Rather than helping your children memorize science facts, it's more important to work with them to find out about things together. Show them the delight of looking at the world through "scientist's eyes."
- Hands-on experiences are very important! For example, show how to use prediction, experimentation and application when studying the concept of "float and sink" with bathtub toys. Develop the fine art of observation by taking time to watch and wait with your child. Explain how by taking quiet time to observe nature and objects; children construct their own knowledge of how things work.
- Demonstrate open-ended questions that will invite their child to wonder, predict, experiment, and evaluate. Here are some examples: *What can we do with this paper towel? What can we do with it when it's wet? When it's dry? When it's wet or dry?*
- Teach what you know! If you like animals or plants, start there. If magnets and earth science is your thing, begin there.
- Sharing and learning from your children is very important! Your children's interests can be used as a starting place for investigations.
- Use your surroundings. Get pine needles from your Christmas tree vendor, dog fur from your local groomer, pick up pine cones, feathers, leaves, etc. whenever you find them. Ask your local pet shop for snakeskin, feathers, and other animal items. Once the word gets out that you collect these things, people will save them for you.
- Answer their questions honestly. If you don't know an answer, find out. Then, tell the children where you found the answer. Even preschoolers understand looking up information in books, on computer programs, and on the Internet.

Child's Day Monthly

PARENT VOLUNTEERS IN THE CLASSROOM

By Marie E. Cecchini, MS

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As educators know and research verifies, a critical factor in a child's educational success is parent involvement. A positive home-school connection not only benefits the child; it also benefits the teacher. Parental involvement through volunteer contributions, either physical or material, can lighten the teacher's load significantly.

Step One: Parent Volunteers

The first step in seeking volunteers is to extend the invitation. This is done via the class newsletter or website, personally (for instance, during a Parent's Night Out), or individually through the use of a parental letter. The invitation, however a teacher chooses to issue it, lets parents know we value their time. Their child's education is important to us, and with their help, all students will be better able to reach their full potential academically, socially, and developmentally. We are asking for your time, expertise, and talents—whatever you have to share. All contributions, large or small, are welcome. Everyone has something to offer. Those parents interested should contact their child's classroom teachers to discuss convenient times and activities that will be mutually beneficial.

Step Two: Parent Activities

Parents can help out in many ways, both in and out of the classroom. Many teachers often keep the list of possibilities handy when discussing volunteering with parents so we can reassure them if they feel they have nothing to contribute.

Working with Students: There are a number of ways parents can work with children in the classroom. They can help prepare for activities, work

with small groups or individual children on special projects, read to the class, chaperone a field trip, help supervise the class at recess, and assist with a classroom party. They may also want to share information about their careers, cultures or ethnic backgrounds with the class. Some may even be able to share a special skill by involving the children in a unique activity.

Working with the Teacher: Parents who really prefer not to work with a group of children can lend a hand by making copies, assembling student-made books, proofreading newsletters, helping to plan a class or all-school event, assembling parent packets or party gift bags, or collecting recyclables to use for art. Many of these kinds of jobs can be done at home when the parent can squeeze in a few minutes between work and family obligations.

Additional Ways to Help: With a little imagination, parents may even come up with unique ways in which they can be of assistance. For instance, those who are connected socially may know of people who would be interested in donating materials, like clean copy paper or card stock headed to the recycle bin for art projects, and services, like newsletter printing. Parents who feel they have nothing to contribute but are handy with tools may be available to repair broken inside play toys or playground equipment. They may also be able to put together a much needed bookcase using scrap lumber – perhaps donated by a home supply store. The list is virtually endless.

One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade.

-Chinese Proverb

PAC meetings:

Wednesday
April 8th
 &
Wednesday
May 13th

5:30pm
Field Mice
room

DATES TO
REMEMBER!

April 2: Intl.
Children's Book
Day
April 8: Passover
begins @ sundown
April 12: Easter
Sunday
April 15: Income
Tax due!
April 20-24: WOYC
April 22: Earth Day

May 5: Cinco de
Mayo
May 10: Mother's
Day
May 11: Eat What
You Want Day!
May 25: MEMORIAL
DAY-CENTER
CLOSED

S.A.C. Update

S.A.C. arranged a delicious and decadent Ice Cream Lunch in the break room last month that was a big success, and is looking forward to planning some fun summer activities. In the works are possible trips to Schlitterbahn, a picnic at Zilker park, and a bowling party. There have been some challenges in finding a time when everyone is available, but S.A.C. is excited about helping out during Week of the Young Child, and in getting the Child's Day staff together for some "off-campus" fun!

parent volunteers in the classroom

(cont. from pg. 1)

Step Three: Parent Information

In order for your volunteer program to work, you will want to make sure your parents have the following information.

- They need to be on time. They should be aware of the fact that the school day runs on a schedule. Their promptness is essential. They should also know the length of their scheduled time.
- Confidentiality is a must. Stress the fact that it is inappropriate to share behavioral or academic information about other children in the class with anyone other than you.
- Volunteers should know where materials are kept so they can locate them if they need to.
- Parents should also maintain a positive, upbeat attitude when working with children, and they need to know your guidelines for how to handle those that don't want to cooperate.
- Most importantly, they should have fun with the children and enjoy the time they spend in the classroom.

Step Four: Parental Feedback

Obtaining feedback from your volunteers will assist you in making improvements to your program. Take time to talk with each volunteer regarding the contribution he or she has made. Reinforce the fact that parental help is appreciated. Ask if volunteers would be interested in contributing again, and find out if they have any suggestions to offer that might improve the experience for themselves, other volunteers, or the children. Keep an open mind. Finally, have the children show their appreciation by thanking the parent for coming in.

In many classrooms, parent volunteers are still an untapped resource. There are parents who genuinely do want to help, but they may need a little encouragement. If you have yet to incorporate volunteers into your program, this may be the year to alter that situation.

Marie E. Cecchini has written several books for educators and continues to write articles for both parents and teachers.

Meet the Kangaroos!

The Kangaroo's are a young toddler classroom. They have been focusing this past month on dressing and undressing, especially working on getting shoes on and off and pulling bottoms up and down. Numbers 0-5 and basic colors have recently been introduced into the curriculum. They really enjoy playing in shaving cream and play-dough, hand painting with textured paint, and washing babies and dishes with scrubs in soapy water in the sensory table.



Left picture: Associate Jen Winkler and the Puffins deliver some snacks they made to the Kangaroos *Right picture:* Ashley Spillman (see "Staff Stars", p.4) assists during a delicious spaghetti and meatballs lunch.

WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD!

Week of the young child will take place the week of April 20th-24th, and there is so much going on!

This year, the P.A.C. has a number of interesting events planned as well. Joe McDermott will be performing for us, the petting zoo will return with Moses the Camel, there will be a big confetti pool on the playground, and P.A.C. invested in a school bubble machine to turn our playground into a fantastic bubble party!

As always, individual classrooms have special activities planned. Please check with your child's classroom teacher for more information about what they're planning, as activities vary depending on the children's age.

There will also be spots to sign up to read in your child's classroom or come play with them on the playground. If you can, feel free to take part in the festivities!