

October  
2008



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN HEALTH SYSTEM

## 4th Quarter Family Newsletter

# Curriculum Nights

In the upcoming weeks, neighborhoods will be holding their annual curriculum nights. In our busy lives, we wonder how we can fit another event in or some of you may even wonder what curriculum night means at a child care center. Curriculum Night was created to inform parents about what it is we do at UMHS CCC each day and how we come up with our daily activities. Specific topics that will be discussed are:

- Child webs that are done at the beginning of each year, their significance for both teachers and families, and their role in planning our curriculum and activities.
- Observations that teachers record in the classrooms and the portfolios that they put together for each child. These provide a way of tracking growth and learning throughout the year and are the main topic of discussion in parent teacher conferences each spring.
- What happens at their weekly team meetings and why these are important despite the sometimes-tough transition of substitute teachers coming in the classroom.
- How Creative Curriculum is used in each age group to individualize curriculum to your child's needs as well as discovering what areas in a room could use improvement.

Curriculum Nights are important to attend because they are another opportunity for parents to find out more about what children do during their day while they are at CCC. You can meet the families in your child's room, share ideas, talk about the fun and challenges of parenting in your age group with people going through the same things! There will be numerous reminders about the nights, times, and the child care that is available for attendees. We hope to see everyone there!

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### New Gross Motor Specialist

In recent years we have had special "Tammy Holly Time" each Friday for classrooms. Starting this month, our own Carolyn Baker is leading that gross motor movement time each Friday. "Coach Carolyn" has been with the Center since 2001 and has a B.S. degree in Recreation and Parks Management from EMU. She has been a basketball coach for girls basketball teams for 7 years. All of these experiences make for a "Coach Carolyn Time" that the classrooms have really enjoyed so far and we thank Carolyn for stepping up and filling this position for us!

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## Upcoming Events:

<b>CURRICULUM NIGHTS</b>	
• <u>Toddler</u> Curriculum Night NCAC on Hubbard rd.	Wednesday, 10/22 6:00–7:30 p.m.
• <u>Infant</u> Curriculum Night @ center	Thursday, 10/23 5:30–6:30 p.m.
• <u>Preschool</u> Curriculum Night NCAC on Hubbard Rd.	Wednesday, 10/29
United Nations Day	Friday, 10/24
Annual Halloween Parade	Friday, 10/31 @ 11:00
Center Closed–Thanksgiving	Thursday, 11/27 and Friday, 11/28
Festival of Lights–Celebration of December holidays	Week of 12/1/2008
Center Closed - Holidays	12/24 though 1/4/09

## Staff Anniversaries

We have been fortunate enough to have the following staff members for quite a while . . .

### October

Emily McCarty (Monkeys).....3 years  
Matt Smith (Frogs).....11 years  
Jyothi Varma (Llamas).....1 year

### November

Tanisha Conner (Bunnies).....2 years

### December

Wesal Al-Khafaji (Tots).....11 years  
Carolyn Baker (Everywhere!).....7 years  
Hilary Kress (Monkeys).....1 year  
Pam White (Chicks).....15 years

## September's Training Day

Every September, UMHS CCC closes for one day for our annual staff in-service. The morning is dedicated to teacher trainings, and teachers use the afternoon to arrange their new classrooms.

This year for the professional development part of the day, Kadesha Simpson, a former teacher at the Center, continued her series of diversity trainings with us. We focused on diversity among teachers and learned about primary and secondary dimensions of diversity, how to celebrate individual differences among teaching team members, how to encourage open communication about diversity, building trust, and fostering collaboration instead of competition. It was a great team building experience, which was helpful right before transition!

Following the diversity training, four of our teachers facilitated a Creative Curriculum workshop. At UMHS CCC we are incorporating the Creative Curriculum, a play-based early childhood curriculum, into our classroom endeavors, and this workshop focused on three different areas of the curriculum. Valerie Tibbs-Wynne (currently a Frog teacher) taught us about doing careful child observations during the upcoming year – how and when to observe, how and where to record observations, and the difference between subjective and objective observations. Lynn Holland (currently a Lemur teacher) did an in-depth presentation about digital photography in and around the classroom and how photos can be used to promote a sense of belonging to a community for kids, to show developmental progress over the course of the year, and to communicate and share experiences with families. Finally, Cathy Daniels (a Chick teacher) and Leah Davis (a Llama teacher) reviewed the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum and discussed how to incorporate observations to inform activity planning and ensure developmental progress among the children. All in all, an educational morning!

## Curriculum Nights Details

There are three curriculum nights planned—one for each age group:

The Toddler Curriculum Night is **Wednesday, October 22, at 6:00-7:30 p.m.** The meeting is held off site in the **HR building on North Campus**. All enrolled children are welcome to stay at the Center if you will be attending this meeting. We will have staff available to watch children who stay late and they will have dinner here as well. Please sign up for childcare by 6:30 p.m. on MONDAY, OCTOBER 20th if they will stay at the Center during the presentation. We will plan staffing according to the headcount we have at 6:30 p.m. on 10/20. Care will only be provided for currently enrolled children.

The Infant Curriculum Night is **Thursday, October 23, from 5:30-6:30 p.m.** The meeting will be held here at the **Child Care Center in our gym**.

The Preschool Curriculum Night is **Wednesday, October 29, at 6:00-7:30 p.m.** The meeting is held off site in **the HR building on North Campus**. All enrolled children are welcome to stay at the Center if you will be attending this meeting, providing they are signed up at the front desk. We will have staff available to watch children who stay late and they will have dinner here as well.

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## A New Way to Order Books

Scholastic Book flyers are available from September through May as a fundraiser for the Center. You can order books by turning in a flyer to the front desk or you can NOW ORDER ONLINE! With every order, the center earns points towards new books for our classrooms. To order online:

- 1—go to [www.scholastic.com/parentordering](http://www.scholastic.com/parentordering)
- 2—The Class User Name is “umhsccc”
- 3—Password is “kidsread”

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## United Nations Day

On Friday, October 24, we will hold our annual United Nations Day. Each classroom has chosen a country and classrooms will “travel” to other rooms (using their passports, of course!) and experience little bits of the countries’ culture. The classrooms and their chosen countries are:

Bunnies: Togo; Tots: France; Chicks: Brazil; Monkeys: South Korea; Bears: Greece; Llamas: India; Geckos: Finland; Frogs: Holland; Lemurs: Nigeria.

If you have anything to contribute for your or another classroom’s activities, we would appreciate anything you can offer . . . Thank you!

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# The Role of the Social Worker

So...What Do You *Do* Here, Anyway?

There is a growing trend around the nation towards hiring part-time early childhood consultants. Teachers are realizing the increasing need for developmental consultations for children in child care settings. One of the things that makes UMHS CCC unique in Washtenaw County is that we have a full-time social worker on staff – me, Cathy Gorga! I was a preschool and toddler teacher here at the Center (and previously at another UofM center) before earning my Masters degrees in Early Childhood Education and Social Work. I've been here as a Community Social Worker since November of 2005. Most of you have seen me around before, and many of you have met with me for various reasons, but a lot of families still want to know: What exactly do I do here, anyway?!

It's a good question. Like I said, a role like mine is rare in and new to the field of early childhood. My main responsibility is doing classroom consultation and teacher / family support. I spend mornings rotating among the classrooms, observing and interacting so I can get to know every child and teacher in the Center. If teachers have questions or concerns about a child's development or behavior, I'm available to help work through the issue with them. When there are children who need extra support (such as those with special needs or temporary behavior issues like biting), I coordinate with the teachers to ensure that they have the necessary resources (staffing, equipment, information) to support those children. A lot of times we find that "behavior problems" can be solved by brainstorming with a teaching team about the possible causes of those problems: Is it the room setup? The daily schedule? Would small groups be helpful? When matters can't be resolved using our teaching and classroom expertise, I'll usually participate in a parent conference to discuss our next steps.

In addition to classroom consultation, I'm also in charge of our Teacher Education initiative, which means managing our staff academic records and ensuring that all teachers have the early childhood educational background required by our national accrediting body. I run our T.E.A.C.H. college scholarship program, which currently sponsors three of our teachers. Professional development is an important part of every career, and another part of my job is organizing on-site trainings at least every other month for our teachers.

Just as I'm available as a resource for teachers, I am available to families. In addition to facilitating our Parent Discussion Groups and our annual Kindergarten Information Night, I am always available to meet with families, to provide community resource connections (to things like speech or occupational therapy), and to brainstorm solutions. Sometimes this happens in person, but some parents prefer e-mail contact instead.

In my spare time at the Center (ha), I participate in two local early childhood initiatives, one of which tackles teacher education in Washtenaw County, and another of which tackles child care expulsion prevention in the county. I write grants for relevant awards (teacher scholarships, ergonomic improvements, garden supplies, etc.). I'll help coordinate our big re-accreditation process over the next year and a half. In general, I try to respond to the needs of the Center community as they arise, whatever those needs may be.

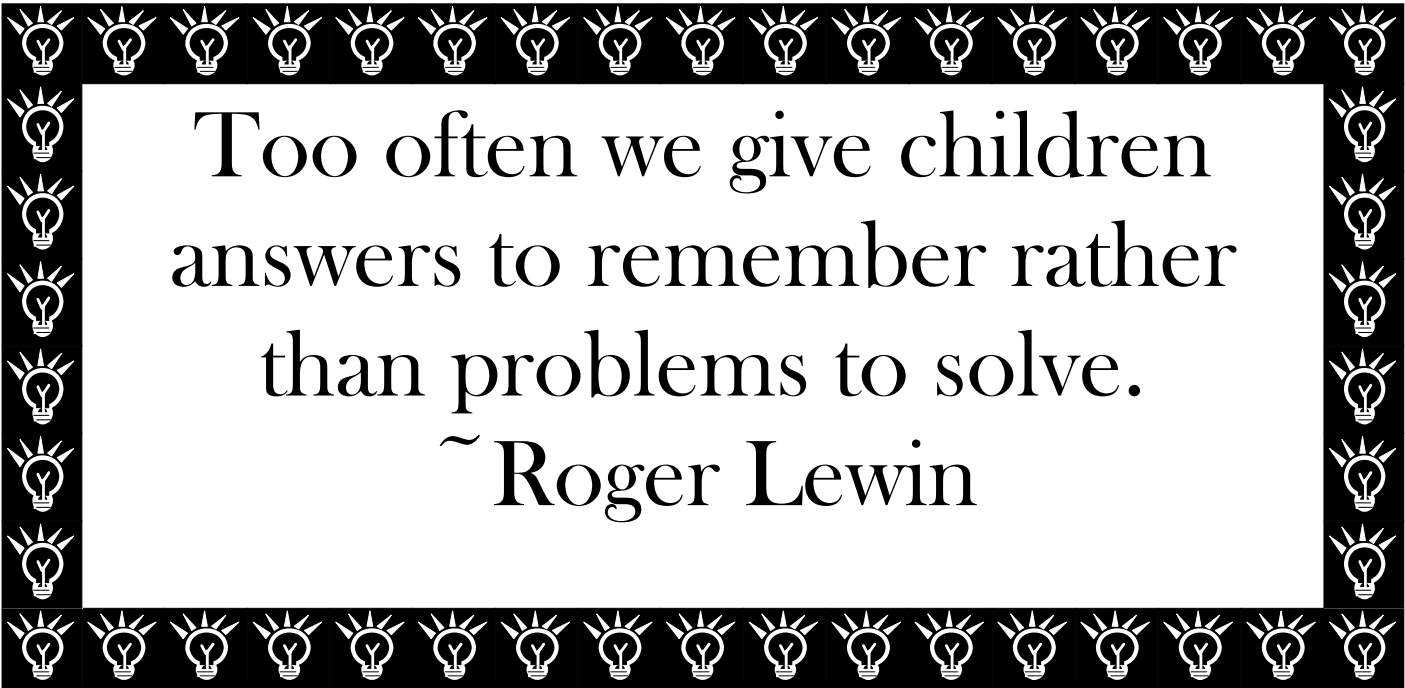
Still have questions? You are welcome to contact me at any time. You can reach me by phone at the Center, or by email – [gorgac@umich.edu](mailto:gorgac@umich.edu). You can always pull me aside at pick-up or drop-off times to talk or to set up a meeting for another time. In the meantime, please let me know if you have ideas about how I can be helpful to the Center community!

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# Helpful Facts about UMHS Child Care

Did you know???

- Parents need to use the check in and out everyday using the time clock at the front desk. This is in addition to signing in and out in the classroom.
- You can sign your child up for our lunch program or buy a meal anytime at the front desk. Single meals are \$3.50.
- The regular center hours are 7:15-5:45. There is an additional charge for using early and/or late care. Children MUST be picked up by 6:30 p.m., as we do not employ staff after that time. You may sign up for late care either until 6:00 p.m. or until 6:30 p.m. for a low monthly cost.
- There is a parent statement box located near the front desk. If you need or would like monthly statements of your payments, you would find them here. Requests for statements can be made at the front desk.
- According to Judy Darling of the Child Care Expulsion Prevention Project in Monroe County, more children are expelled from child care & early educational settings (ages birth through five) than are expelled nationally from grades K-12 combined. Children are sometimes expelled for biting, aggression, or for having developmental delays or disabilities. Expulsion from child care can have long-lasting effects on a child's self esteem and self concept, and it rarely serves as a solution. All the more reason to support our stringent non-expulsion policy here at UMHS CCC . . . which is made possible by our talented and persistent staff, as well as the Marsha Greenberg Fund, which provides financial backing for our inclusion efforts.



Too often we give children  
answers to remember rather  
than problems to solve.

~ Roger Lewin