

Fall 2016

DLC Quarterly

*“Play is our brain’s
favorite way of
learning.”*

-Diane Ackerman

The Power of play

To play is to be free, to be unencumbered and to experience pure enjoyment! Play is at the epicenter of a child’s world. To kids playing comes so naturally that even if we try to stop them from doing it, they will find a way. I’m sure you have witnessed what kids do with boxes and other materials that appear to be garbage? They play and invent games and new uses that escaped our limited adult imagination. In the child development field, we have known for many decades that play is the way young children learn best. But for some reason, education in the US has taken children further and further away from this natural form of learning. I often hear stories and read articles about preschool children spending as little as 20-40 minutes playing outside during their school day, working on dittos and rote memorization, and moving to and from activities when a timer goes off. My stomach hurts to think of a child in that environment.



Creating a class room where freedom, choice, and movement are second runners up to structure and teacher lead activities comes at a very high price. There is a false belief that making kids do more academic type work at a younger age will better prepare them for school later on. This is simply not true. In fact, studies show the exact opposite. Kids who are taught to read, memorize

information, and do other academic work at a younger age do not have better academic outcomes than their peer counterparts. But they are more likely to suffer from stress, anxiety, and depression. They are also less likely to have a positive association with school, and are less motivated to critically think and problem solve. What kids do need to succeed is a strong foundation where they have explored many different materials, learned through experience how to use and manipulate these materials and different tools. They need to learn through experience how to function cooperatively with peers in a group setting, how to process their feelings, and how to share ideas. Kids don't need to be taught how to laugh, explore, and play. They do these things instinctually. They just need adults to give them space to do this important work of play.

To read more about this check out this great article

<http://www.parenttoolkit.com/index.cfm?objectid=269FB610-3A29-11E6-AEE40050569A5318>

At DLC we hold these beliefs about children's play to be sacred. We also believe joy, laughter, respect, and loving communication are not only essential, but are the keys to being a successful and prosperous human being. Play is something that more than ever needs to be valued and protected by parents and teachers. Even though DLC is already firmly rooted in a play based philosophy, we know there is always more to learn and room to grow. Later this month, Linda, myself, and many of our teachers will attend the Annual Play Summit hosted by Fairy Tale Town and The Sacramento Library. We are excited to listen and engage with researchers and experts in the field of play based learning, and bring back a fresh perspective to your children's school experience. **Thank you to our parents and The Night Owls for sponsoring this professional development experience! We are so grateful for your support!**

Sensory Processing for *ALL* Kids

Earlier this summer we also had an opportunity to take a workshop lead by Rose Ahmed (Darius' mom). Rose is an occupational therapist and has a wealth of knowledge on how kids process information from the world through their senses. Kids, and adults alike, take in stimuli from the world through our senses. Our bodies are designed to move, feel, look, listen, makes noise and so much more. This is how we learn!

When we think about our senses, most of us think of the 5 senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, smell. But according to Jean Ayres, PhD, OTR, we also have 3 other vital senses that are less well known. Our *vestibular sense* provides information from the inner ear about balance/gravity spatial awareness, etc. The *proprioceptive sense* provides information through the muscles and about where our body parts are, how they are stretching, and what they are doing. The *tactile sense* provides information through the surface of the skin, from head to toe, about the texture, shape, and size of objects in the environment. It helps us distinguish between threatening and nonthreatening touch sensations (Kranowitz, 2003, pg. 3).

Some of us are over stimulated easily through one or more of our senses, and others are under stimulated. As teachers and caregivers, it is so important to identify what sensory needs our students/kids have and how we can help meet them. Sensory needs that are unmet can lead to a child feeling disorganized and out of sync, with an inability to focus and communicate, and may lead to tantrums and/or meltdowns.

Some kids enjoy wearing head phones in a noisy class room, others enjoy loud noises. Some children find it calming to spin on the tire swing, and others this will make feel nauseous. A deep pressure hug can make one child feel safe and centered, and another will not like to be touched at all. Some children love to touch wet sticky materials and others prefer to stay clean and dry. These are just a few examples of different sensory needs. DLC is building up our supply of additional sensory materials to better meet the needs of all of our children. A couple new things you will see in the classrooms are our heavy Lycra tunnel, our green stretchy band, squishy squeeze balls, and

our ball pit. These are just a few things happening around DLC to improve the school experience of all our kids and teachers.

If you are curious to read more about sensory processing and looking for ideas for your child, check out these two books:

[The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun: Activities for Kids with Sensory Processing Disorder](#)

[The Out-of-Sync Child](#). Both books by Carol Stock Kranowitz, M.A.

Music for Kids You May Have Heard at DLC

I've had some parents ask about the music we have playing at school for the kids and how to find it. One of the most popular songs right now is Try Everything by Shakira from Zootopia. Another favorite preschool artist is Pancake Manor. If you use Spotify or Pandora you can create a Kidz Bop station and you will find pop songs that are recreated with kid appropriate lyrics. Music is one of those things that just breaks us down and makes us feel good, no matter our age. Happy music hunting!

Heat-Ups

If possible, we are requesting that parents send heat-ups in glass containers. When heat-ups are in plastic or metal containers we have to transfer them to something else to heat which makes lunch prep a whole lot longer than it needs to be. Additionally, if you are sending something like mac 'n cheese or a frozen dinner that needs to be heated for more than 1 minute, then stirred and other ingredients added. Please do these steps at home and put in a glass container so we can heat for 30 seconds. We want to spend more time with your children at the lunch table and less time in the kitchen. We appreciate your help, thank you!

Parent Board & Upcoming Events

Located on our front porch is the Parent's Corner bulletin board. This is a new area where I will post about upcoming events and other information relevant to parents. Be sure to check it out! Fall is a magical time of year with a lot going on, so be sure to watch for details regarding:

September 13th & 14th - Picture day

September 14th - Open house (6 PM -7 PM)

September 20th - First Night Owls meeting

October 5th - Pumpkin patch field trip

October - Pumpkin carving – Dates TBD

October 21st - Pumpkin party

Fall work day – Date TBD

Shutterfly

DLC has a shutterfly account that is password protected and a great way of photo sharing. I am working on uploading all my photos from the last few months, and I know some other teachers are as well. If you take photos on field trips or events, please load them on to the account as well.

Here's how: Got to Shutterfly.com/Username: rolliepolliesatdlc@gmail.com Password: ourgroups

Happy fall,

Teacher Jami