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THE BERKLEY BUZZ

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Action Research, Professional Development and Quality Teaching

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A Note From Polly

Our classrooms are in full swing and it is hard to believe 2017 is right around the corner. For those of you reading the Berkley Buzz for the first time, this is a quarterly newsletter that is a supplement to the Berkley weekly announcements and classroom blogs. It is a way to keep you posted on the "big picture" at Berkley. Speaking of the "big picture" thank you to everyone for participating in our fall classroom curriculum survey. Family feedback is a critical component of high quality early care and education and supports our work in providing your children with the best possible learning environment. It is one of the building blocks for establishing meaningful partnerships between classroom practices and families. In addition classroom surveys support our professional development as practitioners. With that in mind, let me update you on our how we are growing as teachers and modeling best practices for early learning.

One of the strategic practices at Berkley is to use action research as a strategy for continuous professional development. Action research is an approach to professional development and improved student learning in which teachers systematically reflect on their work and make changes in their practice based on those reflections. It involves looking at one's own practice, or a situation involving children's development, behavior, social interactions, family involvement or learning environments, and then reflecting and seeking support and feedback from colleagues. It is a systematic, reflective, collaborative process that examines a situation for the purpose of planning, implementing, and evaluating change. Over the past year our action research was and still is focused on the environment as the third teacher. We are looking at how our materials, learning centers, relationships, and nature / outdoor play are interrelated and impact the development of children. When we mention relationships, that not only means our relationships with the children and each other but with our families too. This intentional practice keeps teachers from being stagnant and allows for continuous evaluation and examination of practice and a guiding principle for professional growth (Gardner, 1996).

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Benefits of Action Research

- *Teachers investigate their own practice in a new way, taking a closer look at what children actually do and what they themselves do.*
- *Teachers develop a deep understanding of children and the learning process*
- *It makes teachers work more interesting: At each stage there is considerable self reflection, collaboration and dialog.*
- *"To learn is to change; to change is to create; and to create is to learn." (Gardner, 1996)*

Click here, or paste link in your browse, to view a Prezi of our current action research questions :

http://prezi.com/2d7jk11jtoy2/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy

The process we take in developing our questions is to begin with a focus which frequently is modified as data is gathered. After reflection and discussion, a research question is conceptualized, and a plan of action is developed. Then the teacher implements the plan, observing and keeping detailed anecdotal records (examples of this are the classroom blog and child portfolios). Each month the Sr. Child Development Teachers give an informal presentation to each other by sharing highlights from their documentation boards. It is fun to watch for updates and talk with your teachers on this topic. They love to hear input from you on what your perspective is on the learning / activities in their classroom. Some of our teachers develop continuing education classes that are based on the findings of their action research.

Birthday and Holiday Celebrations

With the upcoming holidays we wanted to remind everyone that at Berkley all family traditions and celebrations are welcome. Birthday and Holiday Celebrations are important to families and children. At Berkley we encourage our families to share their traditions and celebrations with their child's classroom. While young children are not yet able to comprehend that there are people all over the world who have various cultures and traditions, they can understand their own family traditions and rituals. We want our celebrations to be authentic. The goal is to make the learning relevant to the children's immediate lives. Food is a large part of many celebrations and we welcome cooking activities. However, sugary snacks and party favors often create more chaos than celebration. Baking a healthful snack, reading a story, leading a classroom activity, or even dropping by for lunch can be a wonderful way to acknowledge a special day. Please talk more with your child's teacher about how to provide a meaningful, beneficial celebration in the classroom. Please remember that gifts for all children are not allowed. If you want to give gifts, please donate a book or toy to the center so that all children can enjoy it at school.

SNAP

Berkley is once again collaborating with the UMKC School of Nursing Students. This is our fourth year to collaborate with the graduating class on their final project. Previous projects included an evaluation of all our health policies as well as an online training program for new employees, a healthy eating habits cookbook and last year a white paper on the connection between outdoor play and brain development. This years project is a power point on the benefits of Sleep, Nutrition, Academics and Play (SNAP) with a health fair to be held at Berkley in the Spring. To view past projects just visit our website and go to our online resources page

http://education.umkc.edu/community-centers-and-programs/the-edgar-l-and-rheta-a-berkley-child-and-family-development-center/resourceslinks/

Berkley's 12 Annual Chris Cakes Pancake Breakfast

Friday, February 10th is Berkley's 12th annual Chris Cakes Pancake Breakfast. For $5.00 you get all the pancakes and sausage you can eat. The breakfast is held in the morning of our monthly PDD from 7:00 – 10:00 A.M. The breakfast is a small fundraiser for our school but more importantly it is a fun social event for the children, families, staff and our community.

For every ticket sold and used Berkley receives $1.00. For every ticket sold and not used Berkley receives the full $5.00. In the past the pancake breakfast has raised between $1,200.00 and $1,400.00 with up to 350 people attending! Funds are used to purchase program materials such as the Wind Tunnel and Magni Wall in the purpose room.

A Chris Cakes Pancake Breakfast is so much fun and the children love to come with their families!

Who comes to the breakfast? Berkley families, Children, grandparents, friends, UMKC faculty, staff, and students, everyone is welcome. We had 300 people last year.

How many tickets do I have to sell? We encourage each family to sell 10 tickets. Tickets will go on sale Tuesday January 10th. Monica will have individual envelopes, with 10 tickets, for each family at the front Desk.

Where is the Breakfast? The Pancake Breakfast is held at Berkley. We use the purpose room and all the classrooms. The doors open at 7:00 A.M. and we serve breakfast until 10:00 A.M.

SAVE DATE, Saturday, April 22, 2017

Continuing and Professional Education and

Edgar L. & Rhea A. Berkley Child and Family Development Center

Invite you to attend:

Nature Play: Take Childhood Back MINI Conference

9:00.-10:25 a.m.- NaturePlay Film

Directed by Daniel Stilling and featuring Matt Damon for more information on the film. **Click here or copy and paste link into your browser**

http://www.natureplayfilm.com/

Cost: Free and open to the public. Registration required.

Mini-Conference for teachers, or parents if you are interested, after the movie.

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Optional CEU Sessions

Two sessions available, choose between: Nature Play for Infant and Toddlers or Nature Play and Preschool Children

Cost: $24.00 (.2 CEUs/2 contact hours)

Registration and session descriptions available soon

umkc.edu.education/ce/ecwregistration