Suzuki Strings

The Community Music Institute through the University of Oregon School of Music will present a free interactive presentation of string instruments and the Suzuki education system:

When: Saturday, February 5th, 10:30am — 11:30am
Where: The Many Nations Long House

Vivian Olum Child Development Center
University of Oregon
Director's Newsletter
What is social and emotional competence? The Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has spent years defining the skills that make up these competencies in children from preschool through high school. The 5 main components of social and emotional competence in children are: self-awareness, self-management or self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Why do these social and emotional competencies matter? Research indicates that preschool through high school children with better developed social and emotional competencies are:

- More likely to use behavior with empathy and show less aggression (Denham, 1998)
- Better able to follow classroom rules, inhibit negative reactions, and manage their attention (Bierman et al., 2008)
- Rated more positively by teachers and peers (Denham, 2006)

In contrast, children with low levels of these skills are:

- Less liked by and receive less positive feedback from teachers (Raver, 2001)
- Less likely to develop “school attachment” that is, liking school and wanting to participate in it
- At greater risk for expulsion from school (Gilliam, 2006)

Helpful social and emotional learning websites are: The Incredible Years (www.indredibleyears.com), Preschool and School Age PATHS (www.channing-betke.come/prevention-programs), The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel), The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (www.casel.org)

The Path Towards Social and Emotional Competence

Papa’s Pizza Fundraiser

Papa’s will donate to VOCDC 50% of the value of food purchased when the flyer is presented on the day of your fundraiser. Flyers are available in your child’s class and the front desk. The fundraiser goes all day. NOTE: Delivery purchases are not included in the fundraiser.

WHEN: Wednesday, March 9th
WHERE: Corner of Coburg Rd & Willakenzie Rd. (1577 Coburg Rd)

The Papa’s Fundraiser is a great way to raise money for the school while enjoying a delicious meal!
The NACC Leadership Team is a core group of early childhood educators, designers, and landscape architects who came together in 2006 with a dream to change the world for young children. They represent six continents across the globe, and serve as key contact points for others around the world who have a desire to improve the lives of young children.

Wonder, the newsletter of the NACC, welcomes submissions from all NACC members and you can join this organization by going to their webpage: www.worldforumfoundation.org/nature. The mission of the Nature Action Collaborative for Children is to reconnect children with the natural world by making developmentally appropriate nature education a sustaining and enriching part of the daily lives of the world’s children. The World Forum website has an extensive section on connecting children with nature that is full of research-based information on the benefits of children interacting with nature. Some of the research topics you can explore are: The adverse effects of disconnection from nature including fear of nature, reduction of outdoor time and its relation to increased health risks and outcomes. The cognitive benefits of connecting children to nature (increased skill and knowledge development) include increased observation and creative skills, fostering language development and collaboration skills. The mental health benefits of nature research include buffering from stress factors in childhood, help in reduction of ADD and ADHD behaviors, and an increase in positive feelings about self and others. Research also validates the physical health benefits of connecting to nature by improving coordination, balance and agility, taking risks in outdoor adventures with actual decreased and minimized childhood accidents and improvement of the overall health of children.
The Vivian Olum Child Development Center is a constructivist program that follows the psychological theory that came from Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky.

Cognitive constructivism is based on the work of developmental psychologist Piaget. His theory has two major parts: "ages and stages", which predicts what children can and cannot understand at different ages, and a theory of development that describes how children develop cognitive abilities (Chambliss, 1996). The theory of development is the major foundation of cognitive constructivist approaches to teaching and learning. Piaget's theory of cognitive development suggests that children cannot be "given" information which they automatically understand and use, they must "construct" their own knowledge. They have to build their knowledge through experience. Experiences allow them to create mental images in their head (Chen). The role of the teacher and the classroom environment are important parts of Piaget's theory. The role of the teacher is to provide a classroom full of interesting things to encourage the child to construct their own knowledge and to have the ability to explore. The classroom must give children the opportunity to construct knowledge through their own experiences. There is less emphasis on directly teaching specific skills and more emphasis on learning in a meaningful context.

The second type of constructivism is Social constructivism: a theory developed by psychologist Lev Vygotsky. Similar to Piaget's assumptions about how children learn, Vygotsky places more emphasis on the social context of learning. Social constructivism puts more importance on the teacher's role in learning: the teacher is active and involved with the children. Social constructivism argues that students can, with help from adults or children who are more advanced, grasp concepts and ideas they cannot understand on their own. Teachers do not stand by and watch children explore and discover. Rather, they may guide students as they approach problems, may encourage them to work in groups to think about issues and questions, and support them with encouragement, advice, and ask questions to support the child's learning.

The Vivian Olum Child Development Center chooses to focus on the broad overlap of these two theories, even though there are some differences. We feel that teachers do play a vital role as they set up problems, activities, etc in the classroom environment and monitor the students' exploration, guide the direction of inquiry and promote new patterns of thinking (Brooks & Brooks, 1995). We feel it is up to the teacher to facilitate the constructivist learning process. The structure and routines of the learning environment should promote opportunities and events that encourage and support the process of understanding. Teachers seek out the child's interests, point of view and value their expression of ideas, opinions, and questions. Constructivism promotes increased social interaction and discussion in the classroom, both between teachers and students and between students.

Project Approach: A project is an in-depth investigation of a topic worth learning more about. The investigation is usually undertaken by a small group of children within a class, sometimes by a whole class, and occasionally by an individual child. The key feature of a project is that it is a research effort deliberately focused on finding answers to questions about a topic posed either by the children, the teacher, or the teacher working with the children. Projects provide the backbone of the children's and teachers' learning experiences. They are based on the strong conviction that learning by doing is of great importance and that to discuss in group and to revisit ideas and experiences is the premier way of gaining better understanding and learning.
Some Examples of VOCDC Projects:
- Gardening
- Stores, restaurants
- Nature: including Snowflakes, leaves, weather
- Cooking: things to eat, drink and play dough
- Clay
- Music
- Planets and stars

**Integrated Concepts:**
- Teacher instructs, determines content; integrates skills and content

**Integrated Teaching:**
- Teacher instructs, determines content; integrated skills and content

**Integrated Concepts:**
- Teacher instructs, determines content; integrated skills and content

**Units:**
- Teacher instructs, determines content; unified exploration of several content areas on a narrow topic

**Thematic Teaching:**
- Teacher instructs, determines content.
  - OR
  - Child-initiated; learning experiences integrated over a broad topic

**Teacher-Directed Inquiry:**
- Thematic approach with teacher directing and planning in-depth research and exploration by children

**Projects:**
- In-depth investigation; may be child or teacher-initiated, research focused on finding answers to student questions, direction follows children’s interests

**Less child initiation & decision-making**
- More child initiation & decision-making

**Degree of Child Initiation and Decision-Making in Different Approaches to Teaching**
When Should Your Child Have a Vision Exam?

A “well baby” comprehensive vision examination should take place between 6 to 12 months of age. Early detection is critical in preventing and treating vision conditions that can have lifelong effects. An evaluation should be sought sooner if you notice delays in development, if your baby has an eye that turns outward or inward (lasting more than a few seconds), or if you have noticed excessive rubbing of the eyes. These are indicators of abnormal visual development and should be evaluated by a developmental optometrist as soon as possible. Developmental optometrists have special training in infant visual development and visual conditions found in infants and are trained to use the latest technology and procedures to provide a thorough examination of your child even if they can’t communicate or you think your baby will be uncooperative. Did you know that infants can see only about 20/400 after birth, but can see 20/40 by the age of one? Did you know that infants and toddlers are usually farsighted? Delays or difficulties with a child’s motor development can influence development of visual skills and the process of becoming less farsighted.

Building Updates:
While we were closed for Winter Break, some work was completed on our building:

- Krista Dillon, Emergency Planner and Response Coordinator, was able to see that the earthquake retrofitting was done in our classrooms. If you look around your child’s classroom, you are likely to notice elastic cords that are attached to shelves to keep things from falling out and some shelves that have been attached to walls with strap systems.
- The Harvey and Price crew was able to finish the installation of the fire sprinkler system in the main building as well as the painting of all the pipes so make them “disappear”.
- AES was able to start and finish the installation of a new (replacement) electronic fire alarm system that communicates to the fire station as well as the campus monitoring system. In addition, they replaced all of our smoke detectors that had a history of malfunctioning and updated all the hand-pull alarms.

This represents several thousands of dollars of work that VOCDC was not charged for thanks to grants and other department funds. This will take us a big step closer to getting our state child care certification.