Before we know it, fall term will be ending and we’ll all be caught up in winter break activities. Before that happens, I want to catch you up on VOCDC news!

Thanks to all who participated in our “Make-it” plate fundraiser. We raised a little over $300 and hope to get some new equipment for the Commons area. Plates should be ready to pick up from the front desk around the first week of December. When you are thinking about gifts, don’t forget that we have scrip available; you can make your purchase at the front desk from Casie or Kristy. Besides making a great gift, our center gets a percentage of the sales which helps us too!

During finals week, the VOCDC staff will be providing food for our student workers. There will be a crock pot of soup each day along with rolls, crackers, and snacks. VOCDC parents historically provide food for winter term finals week. However, if you want to bring snacks the week of December 8th, I know our students would really appreciate it as I’ve noticed that food for students does not go to waste around here!

Thank you to all the parents who have signed permission forms to allow your children to participate in research and other UO student projects at our center. Many students from the Department of Psychology, Communication Disorders and the College of Education have completed observations and work on various projects. Your permission allows VOCDC to be part of the greater university’s goals and programs.

During this term, children have been able to participate in enrichment experiences at the Schnitzer Museum of Art, The Museum of Natural and Cultural History, a dance production and practice performances by the marching band. These are just a few of the unique experiences and opportunities our children can have as part of our university campus!
Our First Electronic Newsletter

We are so excited to have a newsletter section on our web page where the current newsletters will be posted. In addition, each new edition will be sent to you as an attachment to your email. These are just the beginning steps toward better use of technology and increasing our focus on sustainability through paper reduction.

Soon, classroom newsletters will also be emailed to you. Email will be used to notify parents that a new newsletter is available and will be sent as an attachment for a while until we all become more comfortable with using our website to access current program as well as classroom information. As always, your feedback is valuable to us so that we know our changes are working for you. There are always lots of things happening at VOCDC and we want you to be informed!

Car Safety Seat Check-up

We had a very successful clinic on Nov 1st. Every parent that came learned something new about their child’s car safety seat and/or needed an adjustment. Did you know that the seats have expiration dates? Where should the shoulder straps be in relation to your child’s body? Is your seat tethered to your car? Does your child’s seat move more than 1 inch? How much of the seat straps can you pinch between your fingers? Do you have a plan to transition your child from infant position to toddler? From preschool to a booster seat? There is a lot to know and the safety seat technicians really want to help you. If you couldn’t make the clinic you can call one of the following places to attend a clinic or schedule your own appointment: Station 2 at Chambers: 984-2160. Bethel Public Safety Station: 682-5763. Campus Unit: 968-5773. Also, we will be having officer Pieske come to check our vans and the booster seats we use and talk to us about transporting preschool children on field trips. Our staff will no longer be able to install your child’s car seat in our vans for field trips until we have some guidance from Officer Pieske. Stay tuned for more information about transportation for field trips.

VOCDC Advisory Council: Fall Update

VOCDC parent Council members are:

Yvonne Bradford: Voyagers
Heather Brinton: Builders & Voyagers
Jan Buhmann: Discoverers
Michelle Holdway: Builders
Gordon Lafer: Pathfinders
Prita Mani: Adventurers
Angus Nesbit: Voyagers
Amy Singer: Inventors
Dusky Steele: Voyagers
Cari Vanderkar-Moore: Builders

Notes from the most recent meeting are posted in each classroom along with how to contact each Council member. The Council is meeting monthly this year and we have decided to form focus groups around the following topics that are both of interest and supportive to the center’s operations: Nutrition, sustainability, technology, safety, and student appreciation. Next meeting: Dec. 8th
Nutritional Change

We became aware of the opportunity to use Nancy’s Yogurt as a supplier for our center. They are already delivering to the campus EMU and they agreed it would be easy to stop by VOCDC once a week to deliver yogurt and perhaps some other dairy products in the future. We will be serving the children the organic, low-fat, vanilla yogurt. It does taste a bit different (a little more tangy) than the Activia we have been serving, so it may take a few times before the children are used to it.

Encouragement vs Praise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Praise:</th>
<th>Encouragement:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stimulates rivalry &amp; competition</td>
<td>Promotes cooperation &amp; contribution to a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on quality of performance</td>
<td>Little or no evaluation: promotes acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluative &amp; judgmental</td>
<td>Emphasis on specific contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fosters fear of failure &amp; dependence on adult praise</td>
<td>Creates “try” ers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Links worth of receiver with behavior/talent</td>
<td>Fosters acceptance of being imperfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often not specific or genuine</td>
<td>Fosters self-sufficiency &amp; independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus: interests &amp; feelings</td>
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Encouragement Starters:

- You have really learned how to…
- You must feel proud of yourself….
- You have worked so hard….
- That’s a cool way to…..
- I’m so appreciative that you…..
- You put a lot of work into …..
- Great problem solving by……
- Super thinker for ……..
- What do you like best about…..
- An extra huge high-five for…..

Fostering Emotional Literacy in Children: Labeling Emotions

The ability to label emotions is a developmental skill that is not present at birth—it must be learned. There is a wide variation in the point at which children can start to demonstrate this skill. Adults can play a large role in children’s ability to identify, understand, and express emotions in a healthy way:

*Express your own feelings using labels and behaviors: as parent spills milk: “oh boy, is that frustrating. Oh well, I better take a deep breath and figure out how to clean it up.”

*Label your child’s feelings: provide feeling names for their emotional expressions and their vocabulary will grow! When a child yells ”Daddy!” And runs up to hug him. The dad can say “Oh boy, you look so happy and surprised that I am here early”. As a child’s feeling vocabulary develops, their ability to correctly identify feelings in himself and others.

*Play games, sings songs, and read stories with new feeling words:

Look through magazines and find feeling faces and label them. Play “feeling face charades”. In the mornings, or at dinner time, have children “check in” about their feelings. Ask them what was your “high” and what was your “low”? *Play different kinds of music and ask the child what kind of feeling it sounds like: the library is a great resource for all kinds of music. Listen and then find movement that demonstrates that feeling. You can use balls, scarves, ribbon, etc.
Communication disorders can be prevented in children, particularly in the areas of noise-induced hearing loss and voice disorders. This article contains excerpts from the American Speech Language Hearing Association.

One preventable type of hearing loss is **noise-induced hearing loss**. Loud noise is a pollution that can affect hearing sensitivity. Children of all ages are exposed to a lot more noise now than in past decades. Parents should remember that the younger the child the closer the ear is to the sound source, because young children often hold toys close to the ear. Over time, loud noise causes a high frequency hearing loss. A child with even a mild high frequency hearing loss has significantly greater difficulty listening in a classroom, which often has poor acoustics. Studies have shown that children with high frequency hearing loss have more learning difficulties and behavior problems than children with normal hearing.

Prevention is key and a lot less costly than treatment once the damage has occurred. Educating parents and children on the possible consequences of noise-induced hearing loss may go a long way to prevent this type of hearing loss.

**Vocal Abuse:** Children are loud. They yell on the playground, they talk loudly in noisy classrooms, and they scream when happy or upset. While all this yelling and screaming is often grating on the nerves of adults, it can also have more serious consequences - the development of vocal nodules or polyps. Children who are vocally abusive or have developed nodules or polyps may have hoarse or breathy voices or may lose their voice during the day. For information about the effectiveness of vocal abuse prevention activities and the impact of treatment on children with voice disorders, check out the following links:

- [Home, Community and Recreational Noise ASHA noise](http://www.asha.org/public/hearing/disorders/noise.htm)
- [Effects of Hearing Loss on Development ASHA hearing loss and development](http://www.asha.org/public/hearing/disorders/effects.htm)

*Preventing Hearing and Speech*

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**VOCDC is Accepting Applications**

We now have a place on our website that lists the areas that we have current openings for enrollment. The openings are: part-time for 2-5 year olds and after school spots are available Monday through Friday. Please pass the word to your friends as we'd like to fill these openings as soon as possible. Have them call Kristy @ 346-6596 for detailed information about the openings available.

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**Snow Day Policy**

What to expect???

When the inclement weather swoops down on Lane County, it's always good to know in advance what will be happening at the VOCDC. The center will be open unless the UO closes which is VERY RARE! If in doubt, you can check the UO homepage on their website. Even if the public schools close, we will be open. Parents should call in to let us know if you are NOT going to be bringing your child to VOCDC for their regular schedule as we need to know how to staff the classrooms.

Please bring your child to school with the appropriate clothing for cold weather, playing outdoors, building snowmen and such.

School Age Snow Day Services:

Care is provided for 4J closure days from 8:30am to 5:45 (one hour less than regular operating hours so we have time to get staff here.) There is an additional fee and pre-registration is required. Registration packets are available from the front desk. Once registered, if the school district calls for a snow day you will be charged a flat fee (not based on time used) which will be added to your monthly bill. As with other days, morning and afternoon snacks are provided and children bring their own lunches.

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**November:**

VOCDC will be closed on November 27th and 28th.

**December & January:**

VOCDC will be closed from December 24th through January 2nd.

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**SCHOOL CLOSURE REMINDER**

November:

VOCDC will be closed on November 27th and 28th.

December & January:

VOCDC will be closed from December 24th through January 2nd.
In the market for a new bike? When selecting bikes for kids, here are some basics to know:

• Make sure to consider a child's age, maturity level, and the riding environment.

• Before making any purchase, be sure that the child is in the age range recommended for the cycling gear. Once you’ve brought the bike home:

  • Never carry a child younger than 1 year old on a bike, even in a child seat — a baby doesn't have the neck strength to wear a helmet or safely sit up in a seat.
  • When biking with your child, stick to areas you know are safe, like bike paths, parks, and streets with little or no traffic.
  • Everyone in your family should wear a helmet while riding. Make sure that helmets fit properly, and that any harnesses and belts are fastened securely.

Other Considerations:
* Don't buy a bike that's too big, assuming that your child will grow into it. An oversized bicycle is dangerous and could lead to injury.
* Bikes for younger kids (about age 7 or younger) should have coaster (or foot) brakes, not hand brakes.
* Bikes for kids older than 7 should have foot and hand brakes. That way, kids can get used to using hand brakes before graduating to the bigger bikes that only have hand brakes. If you're buying training wheels, be sure they can be adjusted as riding skills improve. And make adjustments when your child outgrows a bike. When a bike is too small, kids have to stand up on the pedals, and can't balance as well or get in a position to ride it safely. Having a bike that's safe — and a good fit — helps kids develop a love of bicycling that can last for life!

When kids are active, their bodies can do the things they want and need them to do. Why? Because regular exercise provides these benefits: strong muscles and bones, weight control, decreased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, better sleep, a better outlook on life. Not only that: Healthy, physically active students are more likely to be academically motivated, alert, and successful. And physical competence builds self-esteem at every age.

So there's a lot to gain through regular physical activity, but how do you encourage kids to do it? The three keys are:

(1) Choosing the right activities for a child's age: If you don't, the child may be bored or frustrated.
(2) Giving a child plenty of opportunity to be active: Kids need parents to make activity easy by providing equipment and taking them to playgrounds and other active spots.
(3) Keeping the focus on fun: Kids won’t do something they don't enjoy. When kids enjoy an activity, they want to do more of it. Practicing a skill — whether it's swimming or riding a tricycle — improves a child's abilities. The child feels accomplished, especially when the effort is encouraged. These good feelings often make the child want to continue the activity and even try others.

It's important for parents to understand a child's fitness personality. Personality traits, genetics, and athletic ability combine to influence a child's attitude toward participation in sports and other physical activities, particularly as they get older. Which of these three types best describes your child?

The casual athlete: This child is interested in being active but isn't a star player and is at risk of getting discouraged in a competitive athletic environment. The athlete: This child has athletic ability, is committed to a sport or activity, and likely to ramp up practice time and intensity of competition. If you understand the concepts of temperament and fitness types, you'll be better able to help your child find the right activities and get enough exercise — and find enjoyment in physical activity. Some children will want to pursue excellence in a sport, while others may be perfectly happy and fit just being casual participants. The athlete, for instance, will want to be on the basketball team, while the casual athlete may just enjoy shooting hoops in the playground or on the driveway. The non-athlete is likely to need a parent's help and encouragement to get and stay physically active. That's why it's important to encourage kids to remain active even through they aren't top performers.

The nonathlete: This child may lack athletic ability, interest in physical activity, or both.
Older kids may be able to pitch in even more, such as getting ingredients, washing produce, mixing and stirring, and serving. If you have teens around, consider assigning them a night to cook, with you as the helper.

3. ENJOY: Even if you’re thinking of all you must accomplish after dinner’s done (doing dishes, making lunches, etc.), try not to focus on that during dinner. Make your time at the table pleasant and a chance for everyone to decompress from the day and enjoy being together as a family.

They may be starving, but have your kids wait until everyone is seated before digging in. Create a moment of calm before the meal begins, so the cook can shift gears. It also presents a chance to say grace, thank the cook, wish everyone a good meal, or to raise a glass of milk and toast each other. You’re setting the mood and modeling good manners and patience.

Shared family meals are more likely to be nutritious, and kids who eat regularly with their families are less likely to snack on unhealthy foods and more likely to eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Beyond health and nutrition, family meals provide a valuable opportunity to reconnect. This becomes even more important as kids get older. Family meals are a good time to teach appropriate behavior that kids also can use at restaurants and others’ houses. Examples are establish rules about staying seated, passing items instead of grabbing them, putting napkins on laps, and not talking with your mouth full. You can gently remind when they break the rules, but try to keep tension and discipline at a minimum during mealtime. The focus should remain on making your kids feel nurtured, connected, and part of the family.

Keep the interactions positive and let the conversation flow. Ask your kids about their days and tell them about yours. Give everyone a chance to talk.

Need some conversation starters? Here are a few:
If you could have any food for dinner tomorrow night, what would it be?
Who can guess how many potatoes I used to make that bowl of mashed potatoes?
What’s the most delicious food on the table?
If you opened a restaurant, what kind would it be?
Who’s the best cook you know? (We hope they say it’s you!)

Try these three steps to schedule family meals and make them enjoyable for everyone who pulls up a chair:

1. PLAN: To plan more family meals, look over the calendar to choose a time when everyone can be there. Figure out which obstacles are getting in the way of more family meals — busy schedules, no supplies in the house, no time to cook. Ask for the family’s help and ideas on how these roadblocks can be removed. For instance, figure out a way to get groceries purchased for a family meal. Or if time to cook is the problem, try doing some prep work on weekends or even completely preparing a dish ahead of time and putting it in the freezer.

2. PREPARE: Once you have all your supplies on hand, involve the kids in preparations. Recruiting younger kids can mean a little extra work, but it's often worth it. Simple tasks such as putting plates on the table, tossing the salad, pouring a beverage, folding the napkins, or being a “taster” are appropriate jobs for preschoolers and school-age kids.

Family Meals are Making a Comeback!