

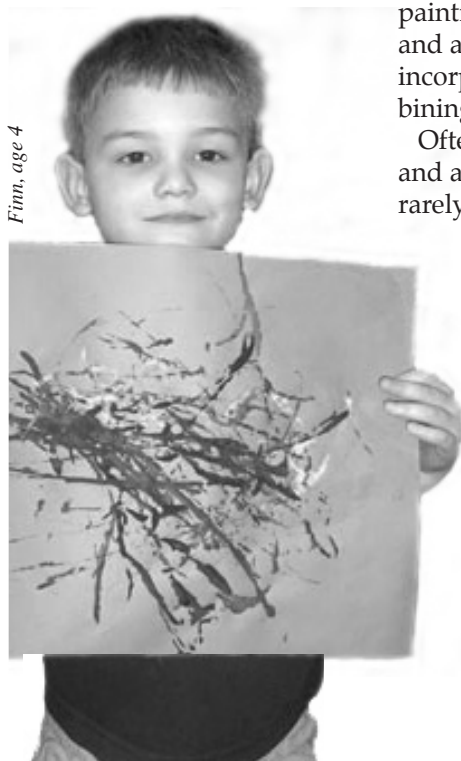
DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE CHILDREN'S CENTERS DBCC NEWS

DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE CHILD CARE, Inc.
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March, 2006

So What's the Big Deal About ART?

by Susan Sandstrom



Finn, age 4

Recently, a kindergartner exclaimed, "I don't want to be a grown up because grown ups don't do art work." We cultivate this passion for art work at DBCC in each of the children- (although, hopefully, not at the expense of adulthood!) Most young children are naturally drawn to art materials and just love to mess about in paint, play doh and markers!

The children at DBCC are exposed to a variety of art mediums at an early age. Younger children have materials and activities set out for them. Older children, with enough art exposure, are ready to go to the well-stocked art area and decide for themselves what to do. Creating their own art projects is a big deal for them. It gives children a chance to make decisions, to mess about, to plan, to develop those motor skills, to problem solve, to experiment, to create, to be inspired, and, most importantly, to do their own thinking. Teacher initiated projects rob children of important opportunities to think.

Once children have the confidence to use their own ideas there is no stopping them. In fact, I actually had one four-year-old child say to me, "Susan, we don't need your ideas any more. We have our own." [I tested this statement the next day by putting out materials for string painting. Not one child string painted but the string pieces were eventually put to good use in a child initiated art project!]

Once the children are at this stage, the teacher needs to keep the art shelf well stocked, to be constantly on the lookout for unusual art materials-tree branches, wine corks, odd styrofoam pieces, etc-and to stay out of their way. From here, many children take off. They have many more creative ideas than the stiff adult brain can imagine. What begins as painting at the easel with several colors grows into a wild collage with paper towels, tissues and a chunk of wood for good measure. I turned around one day and a child had actually incorporated his own sock into his collage! The children start thinking creatively and combining mediums and as a result, there is often the most phenomenal piece of artwork.

Often in a classroom we see a "variation on a theme." One child will start an art project and another child will be inspired by the work and attempt to duplicate it. The product rarely looks the same as the original and often is more developed. Other children may be inspired as well until a theme develops. One classroom had rolls of 3" brightly colored gummed paper in their art area. A child created a small basketball player using the rolls of paper to create legs. The other children became interested and the idea took off. Many of the children started making basketball players and they got larger and larger until they stretched from the floor to the ceiling. The children needed a ladder to put their creations on the wall. The classroom eventually had giant colorful basketball players on every wall. It was an amazing sight!

Another classroom had a child who was very interested in creating a police officer hat out of paper. It started very crudely with a flat piece of paper taped to his head. This idea was picked up by the other children and after a few weeks of working every day on the same theme, some of the children were actually creating an entire uniform out of paper. The hat had a band and a bill and looked like a police hat. There were sleeves in the shirt and long pants-all out of construction paper. The children worked together and continued to make needed adjustments and improvements. Projects such as these create a wonderful sense of excitement and purpose in the room.

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So What's the Big Deal About Art?

(Continued from page 1)

Art gives children confidence and is an amazing emotional outlet. Years ago, DBCC had a three-year-old child named David, who was afraid of everything. Every day, all day David sat in a chair. He refused to play and when the teachers put gentle pressure on him to do anything else, he shrieked and had tantrums.

When the teacher felt the timing was right, David was told that his job every day was to do one painting. He shrieked and cried, "NO!" David was brought to the easel crying and a brush was held in his hand and one stripe was made on the paper. "That's all, David, now you can go," said the teacher. But David didn't go back to his chair. He stood there with the brush still in his hand. He looked around and a devilish grin slowly appeared on his face. The classroom got quiet and everyone noticed that David was standing at the easel. David dipped the brush in the paint and slammed the brush against the paper hard. Paint splattered everywhere. This was the first time David had done anything at school. The children and teachers moved closer to watch. He dipped his brush again and slammed it into the paper. Paint went flying everywhere and David started laughing. He dipped again and again, flinging the paint on the paper and laughing almost hysterically. We all went home covered in paint but feeling very happy. From that day forward, David was a different child. Painting gave David a true cathartic experience and he no longer sat and watched. He remained cautious but he could now play and grow.

Art work is so important for a young child's development. One of the best presents a parent can give a child is art supplies and plenty of them (rolls of tape, dozens of markers, stacks of paper, etc.)-along with lots of work space and uninterrupted time to create. There is great confidence that develops when a child is comfortable taking artistic risks. This self-assurance spills over into all other areas of his/her life so the next learning risk-reading, swimming lessons, etc.- is approached with fewer reservations. Put the videos and Leapfrogs away and encourage your child to think, create and learn through art. Help cultivate this passion in your child!



Jocelyn, age 2,
after a vigorous
art project

TIPS FOR ENCOURAGING ARTWORK

- Never draw for children. That's right-simply refuse. If you draw for your child you will eventually discourage your child from drawing-despite your best intentions.
- If you want to demonstrate, that's okay as long as you draw in your child's current developmental level. If your child is scribbling, then your drawing needs to be scribbling.
- If your child shows you her work try very hard not to say, "That's beautiful!!!" Or "What is it?" It is more encouraging to say, "Tell me about it." Or "Now that is a lot of work." Or "I love that little bit of blue peaking over the brown." Or "That squiggly section right there makes me feel like dancing."
- Gauge the amount of art supplies by your child's age.

A two-year-old might be able to handle paper and markers only. As your child grows, so grows the amount of art supplies.

- Try and keep the art materials organized and tidy so they are inviting to use (this can be a reasonable expectation for older children)



Philip, age 4

DBCC Attends NAEYC Conference in D.C.

For the first time in fifteen years the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Conference was held in Washington, D.C. This conference was attended by 30,000 early childhood professionals and some of the biggest names in the field were there including Louise Derman-Sparks who works with diversity issues, Janet Gonzalez-Mena, who writes on diversity and infants and toddlers, Elizabeth Jones and Renatta Cooper whose wonderful new book, *Playing to Get Smart* affirms DBCC's play philosophy, Diane Levin and Nancy Carlsson-Paige who have written extensively about children's war play and Bev Bos whose creative and unusual classroom materials inspire us all. There were approximately

1800 presenters! Almost the entire DBCC staff attended-36 people! Some of the staff stayed in a hotel or with a friend for the 5-day conference and the rest used the school bus that DBCC hired to shuttle staff between the University Center and the Convention Center. To allow for the staff to attend, DBCC closed its doors for two days, December 8th and 9th. To make up for these two missed days, DBCC will remain open for our usual In-Service training days, Columbus Day and President's Day. The DBCC staff is very thankful to the parents for their flexibility and consideration which allowed the staff to attend the conference. Next year the conference is in Atlanta and many of the teachers are all ready talking about attending.

•EVERYTHING I LEARNED, I LEARNED AT DBCC•

Twenty years ago, when my children were of preschool age and I worked for a downtown bank, I heard about DBCC, met Nancy Kramer, and ended up on the hard-working DBCC Board for six years. My two sons attended 806 Park Ave. for a total of seven happy years. I never thought that I would end up where I am now, as a director of a morning preschool in Garrison, New York, currently enrolling 38 three-and four-year olds.

At the time I was asked to take on this responsibility, I had no early childhood professional qualifications. The preschool was in need of rebuilding, and as I began, all I had learned in my years at DBCC came rushing back.

When I first met Nancy, she gave me a copy of the NAEYC's *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*, and its child-centered approach made a tremendous difference to me as a parent, as well as helping understand how programs for young children needed to be constructed. I now refer constantly to the latest edition. I knew from Nancy how critical the physical environment is for young children, and asked her to come and help plan the space we use at our 100-year-old parish house. Her careful drawings, equipment recommendations, and color choices (pale teal and apricot) were essential. When my preschool reopened in 2003, I began taking graduate courses, but it is clear that the most useful and important things I know, I learned at DBCC.

From Susan, I learned to take lots of photographs of children and display them at a child's eye level. Also from Susan, I learned how to write down children's stories. And how to fix a pan of mud for children to put their hands and feet in. And from Nancy and Susan, the importance of communicating with parents with a newsletter, illustrated with children's drawings. From Margo and Susan, I remembered the power of music and singing to welcome children in the morning and to brighten a day. I remember Margo watchfully allowing children to struggle to mutually resolve their differences, instead of rushing in with an adult solution. From Nancy, Susan, and Nan, I remember the importance of things to climb on and places to hide away in. Phyllis had taught me not to draw for young children but to encourage them to develop their own hands and eyes. Phyllis never once raised her voice to any child, and I know how hard that is. Jennifer is my model of what to do when four-year-olds use lots of bad language. I remembered the power of saying goodbye at the back window, and have found that this practice at our window will usually stop the tears of parting.

As Nancy did, I keep all financial information, student records, newsletters, and correspondence on a Macintosh computer—thankfully not the Mac Classic that she used in 1986. The spirit of shared adventure and mutual support that Nancy had with her staff, and friends like Pat, Robin, and Bea, I have tried to attain with mine. I could write on for pages and pages: Bonnie, Evelyn, Edith, Carol, Deborah, wonderful teachers all, whose skill with children made such lasting impressions that they have helped me all these years later. DBCC's legacy lives on not only in my children but in many families who have never been anywhere near downtown Baltimore.

Anita Prentice,
Director, St. Philip's Nursery School

February 2006



Ask Aliceanna

Dear Aliceanna,

My child's classroom seems a bit chaotic in the morning. Should I be worried? I wonder if it's like that all day. Signed: Just Wondering

Dear JW,

Morning is a transition for children (and adults). It is those transitions times that are the most difficult for young children. They are in disequilibrium as they separate from their parent and attach to the teacher. Disequilibrium looks different for different children. Some children will run around, some children will get quiet and clingy, some children will get loud, etc. Then there is the contagious crying factor—one starts and others follow ("If he's crying there must be something to cry about.").

Aliceanna can safely say that no classroom looks the same way all day. Classrooms tend to fluctuate along a continuum of activity. Teachers control the activity levels so active periods are sandwiched between quiet periods.

Some classrooms will start off the school year in disequilibrium and gradually come together into a wonderful cohesive group. Other classrooms start off together and then dissolve into disequilibrium midway through the year. We currently have a toddler classroom that is positively sedate in the morning—but it won't be that way all year! Parents are always baffled when this occurs. "What happened? Everyone was doing so well." Invariably parents start calling because they are worried about the change!

When things are a little rough in a classroom, teaching teams need to analyze the routines and transitions. What is working, what is not working and adjust accordingly. This can be especially hard when teachers are faced with a new group in the fall. There is a steep learning curve—children are a year younger (because it is generally a new group), new personalities, etc. It takes a while to figure a new group out. If the teaching team is also new it can increase the problem.

First of all, don't worry and wonder—ask questions! Ask the teachers and if you are still not satisfied, go to the directors in the office. Probably the morning is not the best time to talk to the teacher, so ask her to call you on the phone when it is convenient.

[Aliceanna loves to hear from you. Drop her a note in the office or email her at uc@dbcckids.org.

Put Ask Aliceanna in the subject line.]



Kindergarten
grocery list for
upcoming
pizza project

ALUMNI NEWS

★Dear DBCC,

Every time I receive a DBCC newsletter, I vow to send you news and a picture of Emily and Judith. So, here it is-only years since that first vow.

Emily is 22 and a senior at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. She is majoring in peace studies, a subset of political science, and looking down the road at law school perhaps and work as a public defender, but first she intends to take some time away from school and work. She graduated from the Baltimore School for the Arts in 2002, where her concentration was theater production. So, we were back in the old neighborhood often.

Judith, 17, is a senior at Maryvale Preparatory School. Remember, she was one of the "pioneer babies" in the infant room at Arch Street? She's looking forward to graduation and college. Her applications are in, now we wait. Judith hasn't decided on a major; it changes frequently-from women's studies to pre-med to pop culture-her true love. Interestingly, in Judith's class at Maryvale, there are two other DBCC alums-Caitlin Klein and Elizabeth Kohlberg. I'm hoping to get a picture of the three of them together as they graduate.

Mike and I are doing well-just trying to cope with each new adventure.

Take pride in the good start DBCC gave our girls, and remember me to anyone who remembers us.

Fondly,

Mary Mauchard

Mike Aaron



★(What follows is an excerpt from a letter from former DBCC Board President, Anita Prentice:

Mikey is spending the year in Bologna, Italy, on his junior year abroad from Brown. Since his DBCC days, he has loved school. He is majoring in linguistic anthropology, having studied Spanish, Latin, Greek, and Italian. He is interested in linguistics and classical languages.

Rhett was accepted at Trinity College (Hartford, CT) early decision and can really enjoy the rest of his senior year at St. Paul's School. He's into lacrosse and, right now, the Battle of Waterloo.

[**Anita**] is the director of St. Philip's Nursery School as well as President of the Garrison Board of Education. Nat is working at M & T Bank, in charge of their investments in the Hudson Valley.

All the best and much love,

**Nat, Anita, Annabel,
Mike and Rhett**



CHILDSPEAK

• The kindergarten teacher was holding up various vegetables for the children to identify. **Jack Vicchio** knew most of them. Teacher held up an onion and Jack said, "It's an onion." She held up a pepper and Jack said, "It's a pepper." She held up a zucchini and Jack said, "It's a Lamborghini!"

• **Jack Vicchio** and his mom were getting in the car to go to school. It was the first snowfall of the season and Jack was busily licking the snow off the car. His mother explained to him that he should be careful because his tongue could stick to the metal if it was cold. He didn't say anything else about it until they were almost at school when he asked, "So Mom, what do you think my tongue is a magnet?"

• **Mahey Gheis**, age 5, was asked what she wanted to be when she grew up. "A teacher because teachers can do whatever they want in nap time!"

• **Mahey Gheis** asked her mother why someone was yelling in the street. "People can sometimes lose control," explained her mother.

"But they are not robots! They are humans!" said Mahey emphatically.

• **Esa Godwin**, age 3 and **Sam Hopkins**, age 3, were sitting on the floor.

"What are you waiting for?" asked the teacher.

Esa said, "I'm waiting for my mommy."

Sam said, "I'm waiting for my daddy."

Esa clarified, "Those are our parents!"

• **Katelyn Nemoy**, age 2, celebrates Christmas and Hanukkah at her house. As her parents were lighting the menorah, Kaitlyn said, "We don't have a menorah at school. We have a Nora!"

• The teacher called to her co-workers, "Ladies, I'm going to the rest room." **Solomon Lubar**, age 3, corrected her, "I'm not a lady. I'm a boy!"

• **Jordan Love**, age 7, told his mother that if someone attacked her he would fight to the death for his mother. His mother said she too would fight to the death for him. Javier, age 4, looked at them both and said, "Why do we have to die? Why can't we all just run?"

Sally Foster Results

Thanks to all of you who sold Sally Foster products for our annual fall fundraiser. We made a profit of \$2775.00! We wish to especially thank our top four sellers:

★Rebecca's parents, **Tasha** and **Benjamin Greenberg** sold \$645.85.

★Jake's parents, **Ilene** and **Barry Horwitz** sold \$401.01.

★Charlie's parents, **Cecilia** and **Aaron Meisner** sold \$352.80.

★Katelyn's parents, **Lucia** and **Jason Nemoy** sold \$224.95.



IT'S A GIRL!

Gina Robertson is an aunt! **Raja Skye Miles** was born on February 14, 2006 and weighed 5 lbs. 13 oz.

Congratulations to Fasheeda, Damond, Rashad and Gina!



Question overheard from a four-year-old.

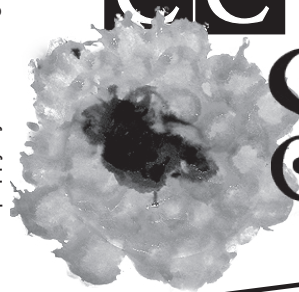
What is more important...love or gravity?



O'Keefe poppy by Hannah, age 5



DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE CHILD CARE'S ANNUAL SPRING FUNDRAISER



Spring Fling 2006

• Light Fare • Music • Silent Auction

Featuring music by

**The Rhodes Tavern
Troubadours**



The Rhodes Tavern Troubadours were collectively nominated for 11 Washington Area Music Awards, including Songwriter of the Year and Vocalist of the Year

Proceeds from the Spring Fling will help DBCC meet its commitment to provide early education and child care services to a diverse population.

Ticket prices:

Earlybird (before 3/3/06)

\$35-individual

\$65-couple

After 3/3/06:

\$40-individual

\$75-Couple

To view some of the more amazing
Silent Auction items ahead of time,
go to our website after Feb. 27:
www.dbcckids.org



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*Childhood should be
a journey, not a race.*