



Little Champ Times

January - February 2008

Mark Your Calendar

February 12, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Lee Elementary

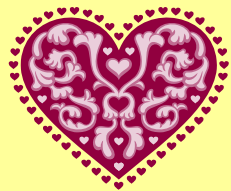
Parenting with the Brain in Mind: The science of nurturing your child's developing mind

The more we know about the brain, the more we understand how stress, play and everyday interactions physically shape the developing mind. As a parent, you can make a difference in building the muscle of your child's brain (it's never too late). Visit www.austininconnection.org for details.

Through February 14

Hearts for Teachers

Break out the glue and crayons and decorate a heart to show your child's teachers how much you love them.



February 18

Giving Tree

The Giving Tree, part of the One to Grow On fundraising campaign goes back up. We're only \$4,468 shy of our \$12,500 goal!

"Q" is for Quality

We know in our hearts that the UTCDC is a wonderful place for our children to play and learn while we're at work or school. But do you actually know why it's such a wonderful place? Ever wonder at how much your son loves books, why Ms. Maria isn't rattled by a room full of hungry 2-year-olds, why your daughter can count to 10 in Spanish or why your 4-year-old is learning to "use his words" to settle a disagreement? Many of these skills can be attributed to the well-educated teachers who lovingly guide our children and model positive behavior for them.

Children need to feel good about themselves and their abilities. The best way to enable this is to provide a stimulating and caring environment where creativity and competence are emphasized. This is what our teachers are trained to do. The majority of our teachers have chosen this work as their lifetime profession. They are dedicated to improving the lives of children and families.

Did you know that our teachers attend workshops and classes throughout the year? Some are sponsored by ACC, Family Connections and WorkSource. University of Texas faculty and graduate students often provide on-site workshops addressing topics such as: Questioning Strategies, Ethics in Early Childhood Education, Diversity, Sensory Integration and Identifying Children with Special Needs.

Did you know that four of our 16 full-time teaching staff have bachelor degrees, three of which are in child development, the other in psychology? Eight of our teachers have a Child Development Associate (CDA) certification or an associate's degree. It is rare for a program to have so many well-educated teachers, especially for the younger age groups.

Did you know that our turnover rate is one of the lowest in the industry? Five of our teachers have been here for more than 10 years!

The support and encouragement we give our teachers helps ensure their happiness and

commitment to the UTCDC and our kids. Keep up the nice words Parents!

Lending Library



Do you want to talk so your kids will listen? Are tantrums bringing you down? Are you grappling with how to talk to your child about a life-changing event, such as death or divorce?

The Center's lending library is chock full of books tackling some of the most common parenting concerns, as well as the most delicate.

Parents need only sign out the book on the clipboard and return it when they're finished.

In case you're curious, one of the most popular titles: *The Out of Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Integration Dysfunction*, by Larry B. Silver.

Food for Thought

We all know that proper nutrition promotes learning readiness and reinforces lifelong eating habits. With all the responsibilities on our plates these days, can you imagine having to pack a lunch and snacks for your child to take to school each day? There are many early child development programs where this is the case.

Fortunately, Dr. Briley and her staff feel that this is an important service to provide because working parents need the convenience and because the UTCDC is able to provide a variety of healthy foods that children like.

The UTCDC follows the guidelines of the USDA Food Program, which require family style meal service. This means that the teachers sit and eat with the children, modeling manners and healthy eating habits. The children serve themselves, opening the door for conversation.

It's important to note that many of our children have food allergies and special dietary needs, which the UTCDC accommodates. The kitchen staff, Ms. Chris and Ms. Jean, and the teachers work hard to ensure that each child receives the right food.

Staff Appreciation and Support

Who loves you baby?

Let Ms. Afsaneh know just how much you love the way she soothes your baby's tears. Tell Ms. Edna how much your son loves the way she reads "Ten Little Ladybugs" with a sing-song voice. Does Ms. Ella know how grateful you are for helping your daughter graduate to Big Girl "Dora" underwear? Have you told Ms. Shara how it warms your heart when your son doesn't want to leave her for the day?

Cut out a heart from the construction paper provided on your child's cubby. Write your teacher's name on it. And allow your child's creativity flow with crayons, markers, glitter, stickers, feathers, buttons, fabric, stamp art — you name it! Take that masterpiece to the front desk and it'll be placed in the gallery of hearts art installation at the front entrance for all to admire.

Janitorial gift baskets a hit!

Big "thank yous" to all the parents, teachers and staff who contributed to the gift baskets given to the janitorial staff the week before the winter holidays. We created four gift baskets with treats such as snack items, hot cocoa and tea, travel mugs, fresh fruit, summer sausages, chocolates and more. Each basket was tied with a bow and a McDonald's gift card.

The activities above are organized by the PAC Staff Appreciation and Support Committee, with financial assistance from the "One to Grow On" campaign.

Spring is in the Air!

In late February, the spring Giving Tree will "Sprout" — this is a great way for families to contribute to the "One to Grow" on campaign, which directly benefits classrooms and the center!!



Super Champ Spotlight



Chu Cao

Oh the wonderful things Miss Chu can do. She can speak Chinese and Vietnamese too.

She teaches children to write and to sound out each letter.

The Explorers will tell you that no one is better.

Miss Chu, our January Super Champ, has been the lead teacher in the Explorers classroom for nearly two years and has memories of doing her practicum in the UT lab school several years ago while earning her bachelor's degree in child development and family relations from the University.

While Miss Chu has a knack for cultivating bookworms and foodies with eclectic palettes, she was named a Super Champ for the way she smoothly integrated new children into the Explorer class before the winter break.

As many parents know, moving to a new school or classroom can create changes in children's behavior, such as regression in potty training or a typically outgoing child becoming shy.

Miss Chu and her assistant teacher, Miss Shara, lovingly incorporated new children into the classroom by giving them one-on-one attention and making them feel special. She helps them "listen to their bodies" and spends time working with them on holding pencils and writing their names. She even counsels parents on ways to develop fine motor skills at home.

Additionally, Miss Chu always takes time to respond to e-mails or talk one-on-one about children's progress. According to Kurstin Hamilton "She is truly a wonderful teacher."

Ms. Chu is a Super Champ!

Super Champ Spotlight



Brenda DeLancy-Young

Ms. Brenda, the lead teacher in the Leaping Frogs classroom for more than three years, is the February Super Champ. She was nominated for a particular act of love witnessed on the playground by a parent in the final days before the winter break.

It was 11 a.m. and a girl from the Explorers classroom was on the playground with her classmates crying for her daddy hours after she'd been dropped off. Despite teachers' best efforts, she was inconsolable.

As the Leaping Frogs arrived on the playground, Ms. Brenda asked the girl to join her inside. A few moments later, Ms. Brenda and the girl returned with a few sheets of colored paper and markers. Ms. Brenda helped the girl write "I love you (girl's name)" and told her it would fix her broken heart.

"I was amazed to see this happen," said Yeo Jung Kim, the Explorer parent who nominated Ms. Brenda. "Ms. Brenda's love extended beyond her classroom and her skills with children were unbelievable.

"And the way that she put it 'It will fix your broken heart,' just shows how deeply she understands the children's feelings."

Ms. Brenda's more than three years with the UTCDC is our gain. She's skilled at American Sign Language and is studying to be an interpreter. She uses it with the children and helps the other teachers to learn it. She also holds a CDA certification.

Ms. Brenda is not only a tremendous teacher, but she is a loyal and trusted colleague.

Ms. Brenda is a true Super Champ!