

September &
October 2021

Family Communication

Downtown Ithaca Children's Center



Dear Families and Caregivers,

Fall 2021 has welcomed us into a new school year with new faces in both our classrooms and throughout program. Our enrollment has returned to sustainable levels. We are ever appreciative for each of your families confidence in DICC!

We are thankful for the ongoing support of our families, donors and local funders which have allowed us to regain our forward momentum. With this support we continue to establish a best practice path to “normal” allowing children the emotional and educational stability they need while providing families the safety and support necessary to maintain employment.

DICC is committed to continue – continue to provide continuity of care for our families to remain in the work force; continue to provide staff development in areas of mindfulness, anti-bias and social justice as we all benefit from continued growth and knowledge; continue to expose youth to the opportunity careers in early childhood education bring not only as career paths but as a conduit to strengthen and develop their community; continue to explore and develop paths of collaboration linking educators and caregivers; ultimately we need to continue to strengthen each other’s tools for the betterment of our community.

Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center is an organization of individuals who not only believe in our mission, many of our staff embody our mission, live and breathe it in their daily tasks, evident in the way they greet everyone who crosses their path— young and old, their sheer presence impacts the energy of other’s days. Unfortunately, two of those individuals have left us in September. Ms. Lynette & Mr. Maurice, thank you for taking the time to do far more than feed our children and staff! Thank you for embodying our mission. You and your family exemplify the heart of DICC. Your daily presence will truly be missed. You will always be family! (Please take a moment to read Mr. Maurice’s farewell letter to DICC on page 4.)



What’s Inside:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Caterpillar | 2 |
| Butterfly | 2 |
| Rainbow | 3 |
| Firefly | 3 |
| Farewell Message from Mr. Maurice | 4 |
| Ladybug | 5 |
| Grasshopper | 5 |
| Bumblebee | 6 |
| DICC Communication— COVID | 6 |

Special points of interest:

- DICC is CLOSED (All Ages Groups) for Professional Development Monday, Oct 11
- School Age Program OPEN 8a-5:30p Friday, Oct 22
- Changes coming in the DICC Kitchen— Welcome Mr. Steve!



Caterpillar

Ms. Bogna, Ms. Ysabel, Ms. Viola

Greeting and Happy October! Fall has arrived and we are so excited to see beautiful colors of the season.

The Caterpillars are looking forward to the changing of the trees and the cooler weather. All of our children love to be outside!

We will use every opportunity to take them out, so that they will be able to discover new things, such as prickly grass, crunchy

leaves, and cool breeze.

In the first part of October we will learn about the fall season. We will discuss the changing of weather and colors of the Fall. In our art projects

we will use mostly red, orange, yellow and brown colors. For our sensory investigation, we will explore the gooey inside, and the

smooth outside of pumpkin.

As the month will draw on and Halloween will approach we will be busy doing crafts and art like bats, spiders and ghosts.

We will also learn new songs and we will read some new stories. Since the "My Favorite Book" topic was a very successful event in the past, please have your child bring in their favorite book from home. We will read all the books during our daily circle time.

Note.

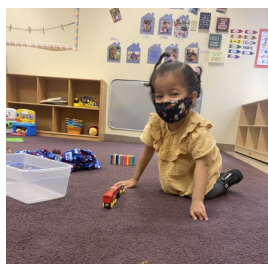
On the bottom of each child's chart, we often add notes about what he/she might be running low on. Please don't forget to read these so that you can stay updated with supplies that your child might need.



Butterfly

Ms. Siham, Ms. Lanaia

Happy September! This month, the Butterfly classroom welcomed a new friend, Sarah, and had to say goodbye to our friend Henry who is beginning a venture at a new school. We also said goodbye to Zelda, who started in one of the preschool classrooms early this month, as well as one of our teachers, Ms. Danielle. With the seasons changing we have focused heavily on weather and how it will change with the coming fall. The Butterflies learned about the rain and clouds, as well as how the leaves will be changing color and falling



in the coming months. Dance parties have been a big hit during the rainy days this month! The children have enjoyed listening to The Action song, The Dragon Hunt song, The Goldfish song, Simon says, and of course, Baby Shark. We have been adjusting well to new rules surrounding the mask mandate among all students age two and older and encourage families to bring cloth masks for their children. We look forward to the coming fall with our Butterflies!

Rainbow

Ms. Natia, Ms. Maria, Ms. Evelyn

HELLO RAINBOW FAMILIES! We would like to welcome Nellie and Yohahn to the rainbow family! As summer comes to an end and we march into fall, I want to remind you all to send proper clothing in for the kiddos as it will start to get colder faster than we expect it to.

This past month we focused on all things summer, from insects and digging for worms to construction vehicles, first responders, and more and the kids had an absolute blast. Heading forward we will be doing a small end of summer bash with a frozen treat week! As well as focusing on the WIZARD OF OZ! We will be turning our room into many different parts of the movie such as munchkin land, the field of flowers, the tornado, the house before it gets swept up and so much more. Each week we will focus on different parts of the movie as well as watching the pertaining clipits. We will also be focusing on letters and recognizing the letters in each child's name.

As always if you have any questions please feel free to reach out to the rainbow teachers!



Firefly

Ms. Ciara, Ms. Abi & Ms. Brittany (interim)

Hello Firefly Families!

We would like to begin by wishing Mr. Mike the best on his new journey as a Kindergarten teacher. He will be truly missed! We also welcome Lilith and Jari to our Firefly family.

As summer has come to an end we ask parents to bring extra warm clothes and rainboots for our outdoor adventures. We will be enjoying as much time outside as the weather allows for!

September allowed us to enjoy many fun outdoor sensory activities such as “bobbing for apples” (COVID safe in individual containers) and making homemade candy apples! Our monthly explorations incorporated “All About Me” where we learned each of our birthdays, favorites—books, food, colors, etc.—how tall am I, body match exercise as well as “I Am Special Mirror”. We have been learning about our feelings as well as our physical attributes.

As in previous months, each week there is a specific letter we work on both in our circle time discussions, books we explore as well as practice packets utilized throughout the week. We continue our work on number & shape recognition and scissor use by overlapping instruction with arts and crafts activities. Also incorporated into our lessons are weekly yoga exercises and learning how to manage and communicate our emotions to aide both our new friends adjusting to our classroom as well as other friends master transitions more successfully.

Along side our exciting learning opportunities, the Fireflies continue to work hard on staying germ free and healthy with our everyday practices in the classroom. We appreciate the help form parents by working on these same skills at home!

Welcome Fall & Stay Safe!

Dear DICC,

It has been my utmost pleasure to serve you and your child(ren). Along the way we have grown to become part of the DICC family. We have seen this community pull together in many ways over our time here. We have said hello and goodbye to coworkers and friends. Each of these times the families of DICC have been there.

Thank you to Ms. Gomber and Krista for taking a chance and hiring me coming in from out of state and entrusting me with the food program. I could not have done what I did without their full support and trust that I had the children's best interest at heart. This includes allowing me to purchase supplies change food purveyors and to operate with full autonomy of the food program, which I do not take for granted or lightly. I know the food budget increased when I came but the waste was drastically reduced, and the quality of the food was improved. My goal was never to just cook for the kids, I always wanted to push their palates and expand their knowledge of food, and allow them to explore all the taste, textures, and ways food can be presented. I believe that I have met this goal. Over the years, we have had, BBQ jackfruit sliders, portabella mushroom carnitas, portabella "steak" sandwiches, curries, stews, stir-fry, soups, themed menus, catered dinners and awesome BBQs.

To my fellow co-workers, thank you for working with me in introducing some of these food concepts to the children. Thank you for providing feedback to what was working and what wasn't, and for your patience in trusting me to get it right. Thank you for sharing your recipes with me, showing me new ways to do things and even sharing your culture and food with me. Now when people ask me, I can truly respond, "Soy Dominicano!"

Not only have I experienced DICC as an employee but also as a parent. I sent my youngest child to DICC, and I saw firsthand how the staff and teachers can impact the child's life. The bond that she made with classmates and teachers she still talks about to this day. This year she went into kindergarten ready to take over the world because of what was instilled in her at the center. I would love to say that this was because she was special, but it is not. It is because DICC is special. I can honestly say that when your child comes through that door they are cared for and loved with a special love that is unique to their individual selves. There are staff and teachers that nurture the child daily. I have seen kids truly transform themselves here while at DICC and that is a treasure I will hold dear to my heart. Where else could I say that I have seen children go from the womb to the Blueberry muffins, then become a Caterpillar, flourish into Butterflies, Dragonflies and Rainbows, and transition into Fireflies, Ladybugs and Grasshoppers, and enter Kindergarten and beyond as Bumblebees. It is truly amazing to see.

I could name names here, but I would hate to leave someone out. To the Teacher's that arrive early, to begin the day, thank you for our morning check-ins on each other. To the Parents that would bring their bundles of love and place them in my arms at drop off, thank you. To the parent that would share their native greeting with me, thank you. To the little fist bumps that I get every morning, thank you. To the child that may not have been able to verbalize their frustrations and made us tune in and stop to listen to what they were trying to say, thank you because sometimes we forget that you are an entire human too, with needs and wants of your own. To the little waves and smiles at the kitchen door as classes journey to their adventure, to the honest voices in the classrooms that say, "I don't like this, Mr. Maurice," but will also give me the thumbs up and say "Mr. Maurice, you're the best cooker!" Each and every one of these sacred memories I will forever hold dear to my heart.

To Krista, Tieara, and the staff, friends, and family (yes, this means you) that I leave behind, never forget someone is counting on you to love them. Someone is counting on you to be safe, and someone will look back and know that they were a part of something special because you made it special. Never forget that just as we tell the children, we too can change the world, even if the world is seen through the eyes of child, you made a difference.

I do not fully know where my journey will take me as I endeavor to pursue my dreams and aspirations, but like every child that leaves DICC, I know that a piece of DICC is coming with me.

In sincere gratitude and appreciation,

Mr. Maurice

Grasshopper

Mr. Rakim, Ms. JaToni, Ms. Zaria

Greetings Grasshopper Parents and Family,

Our class has been making great progress in learning and engagement within the month of September. All of our students have been showing awesome engagement in our circle time, as well as arts and craft time.

Throughout the month of September we were able to learn about letter "V" with "volcanos" being the theme, and the letter "W" with "weather" being the theme. Our students love coming up with words that start with the letter we are learning for day and week, which is one of the highlights of our circle learning time. Moreover, through our wonderful

teacher Ms. Toni, we as a class had the privilege to create volcanos and other arts and crafts that kept our students focused on the topic of the day or week. In addition, we really enjoy Ms. Zaria as well, we have had the privilege to enjoy getting to know Ms. Zaria for our first month as a team— September. We as the grasshopper classroom look forward to a fabulous rest of the year and more.

Now our wonderful Grasshopper students are learning about the letter "F" for the "fall" season, going into the Month of October. The grasshopper classroom and teachers are looking forward to seeing what the month of October can bring to our students learning and educational development.



Ladybug

Ms. Roni, Ms. Lorraine, Ms. Nonni

The Ladybugs have spent September learning about their feelings, families and friends. Can you tell we have been exploring the letter "F"? :)

Within our Feelings unit we read "The Color Monster" and used those colors to help identify how each of us feels throughout the day. If you haven't read this book, ask your child about it and check it out as a family!

Our Family unit explores the likenesses and differences of family structures. We discussed our

own as well as those we may encounter as we make new friends. This exploration concluded with the sharing of our own family pictures. Thank you for sending in these pics for your child to proudly share with their classmates!

Now we progress into discussing Friendships. We encourage the Ladybugs to play with ALL of their classmates. We celebrate the skills and individuality each friend brings to our class. We encourage ALL friends as we kick off this new school year together!

Bumblebees

Hello Bumblebee families and welcome to our 2021-2022 after school program.

We welcome all families and are happy to start the year with you. In a previously sent email you should have received a copy of the overall program schedule. We will focus on homework help, reading, writing, STEM activities, group engagement, sensory, arts and crafts, physical activities and various weekly themes.

This year we continue to implement safety protocols as covid-19 remains a health concern in our daily lives. We ask all families to continue their efforts with protecting the health of our children and the program by social distancing and wearing masks when indoors and unable to socially distance. Your reminder of the importance of these safety protocols to the children is appreciated.

I'm happy to share that we are back at BJM and will have various activities throughout the year which also include visits from the Sciencenter. We have access to utilize more space which will allow for more physical engagement and large motor activities with our program.

As weather is starting to change please be mindful and send extra clothing in case they are needed. We ask that all parents and caregivers when picking their child up to please contact the program phone to notify our providers of your arrival. As we utilize different spaces throughout the school and may not be in the classroom this will ensure the most efficient pick-up of your child.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact either myself or Resana via email (Marcus@dicc.org or Resana@dicc.org) or contact the program phone

Mr. Marcus, Ms. Resana, Ms. Maddie & Ms. Amanda



DICC Communication: COVID

Thankfully COVID exposure occurrence within DICC has been minimal thus far thanks to the consideration and vigilance of our families and staff taking the steps necessary in our day to day lives to keep our risks minimal. Keep up the good work!

Should DICC Administration be notified, either by an individual (parent/guardian or employee) of a positive COVID test result for a child/employee who has been in attendance at DICC within the 2 days prior to COVID test we will take the following measures as advised by the CDC and DOH.

- Immediately instruct parents/staff of individuals who have had close contact (been within 6ft for a total of 15 mins or more) of person who has tested positive to stay home and await contact from their local Health Department with further instruction. (If communication received during operating hours, those impacted will be sent home.)
- Contact the Tompkins County Health Department to provide contact information to effectively conduct contact tracing.
- Notify DICC community of confirmed positive test result impact via email. Respect for the privacy of the COVID positive individual MUST be ensured at all times.

Downtown Ithaca Children's Center

506 First Street
Ithaca, New York 14850
Phone: 607-272-7117
Fax: 607-272-4100
Email: info@dicc.org



The Downtown Ithaca Children's Center provides a creative and culturally diverse environment that fosters the emotional, social, and intellectual development of children. Our successes are achieved through family, staff, and community support and collaboration.

Thank You ...

... for your time, attention and all that you are doing as we move forward together during these new times and ways.

Denise, Exec Director —Denise@dicc.org

Krista, Exec Director of Operations—Krista@dicc.org

Tieara, Program Director- Tieara@dicc.org