

THE VOICE



"Love is in the air"

Housekeeping

1. Monday, March, 13th-Friday, March, 17th: Spring Break, no school.
2. Monday, March, 20th: Statutory Holiday, no school
3. Thursday, March, 30th: Spirit Day!
4. Thursday, March 30th: Kindergarten Mainstream Transition information session, See page 8.



A Message From our Executive Director

Dear families, friends, and staff,

We are already 3 months into the New Year!

We have had a great response from families expressing interest in our Kindergarten program for next year and we are delighted that we will be able to run that program for the 2023/2024 school year! It is important to note that this program differs from our Early Learning and Childcare program as it does not qualify for the 10 dollar a day funding subsidy.

On March 30th we will be holding a Zoom info-session for parents about Kindergarten mainstream transitioning. This information session will cover important topics about how to prepare your child for transitioning, what the transition is like, and what supports are in place in a mainstream education environment. It will be hosted by our amazing Itinerant Team Lead, Jessica Costello, and supported by our incredible team of ECEs and Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. More information on page 8.

Our theme for March is “up in the air” and will focus on a wide range of air related subjects including: aeronautical modes of transportation (i.e. airplanes and hot air balloons), animals that fly such as birds and insects, and weather. As spring is just around the corner, the children will start planting tomatoes inside and will move them to the outdoor garden by end of March or early April. On a related note, the cozy den of hibernating bears that have taken up residency at the centre will be gently woken up from their slumber to enjoy the beauty of spring, though given the current Vancouver weather spring seems so far away.

Lastly, the centre will be closed for March Break from March 13th – March 17th as well as the following Monday, March, 20th.

Wishing you all a wonderful Month!

Warmest regards,



Dawn McKenna
Executive Director



A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Tattoos are a common form of self-expression for many people. For some, their tattoos hold cultural or religious significance. For others, they represent something personal or meaningful to them, and sometimes they are just whimsical or fun. For Vanessa, her tattoo represents her solidarity to her son with hearing loss. You see, behind her left ear is a small black-ink image of a hearing aid, similar to the device worn by her son, Jace.

Like many of the children at our centre, Jace was born with hearing loss. Vanessa recounts that her pregnancy was hit with several complications, and when her son was born he did not pass his battery of hearing tests, which are part of the BC Early Hearing Screening Program.

Vanessa and her husband were concerned for their son's future and how his hearing loss would impact his life.

“There was a lot of anxiety after the diagnosis. We didn't know what the heck we were going to do.”

Jace and his family started their hearing loss journey in our First Words program and are still part of the program today. While their family has received overwhelming support from staff and the CHSC community, outside the sanctuary of the centre her son has faced barriers, stigma, and some preconceived notions from individuals who aren't experienced with hearing loss.



A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words Continued...

In addition, Vanessa described that she felt a tremendous amount of pressure on her to educate her family and friends about hearing loss and the importance of Jace wearing his hearing aids.

“Now the family is so great and supportive of keeping his hearing aids on and minimizing background noise...”

The catalyst for Vanessa’s tattoo came when her son started daycare (outside of CHSC) and he observed that he was the only one with hearing aids. Questioning why none of his friends had hearing aids, Vanessa decided to get her tattoo.

Vanessa noted that Jace thought her tattoo was so cool, but wondered how she took them off. Today Jace is flourishing and Vanessa is so grateful for the tremendous support she has received from the First Words team.

She is working hard to ensure her son feels represented and while there has been progress, she would love to see more representation of the listening and spoken language community in shows and books. When children see themselves represented in media and books it has a positive impact on their self-esteem and identity.

For now though, her hearing aid tattoo serves as a powerful visualization to help normalize her son’s listening device and to reassure him that he is not alone in his hearing journey.



Learning about Black History Month Through Art and Music

by Lisa Labere and Vivian Ip (ECEs)

While placing a new selection of books celebrating Black History Month and friendship on the bookshelf in the Owl classroom, Vivian and I began to look through one book in particular. It was a picture book highlighting well known African American athletes, thinkers, historians, artists, and musicians. The book is titled Dream Big Little One and is written by Vashti Harrison.

Within the book, we came across artist Alma Woodsey Thomas. Neither of us had heard of her before and we chose to google her. Alma Woodsey Thomas creates art through what look like small dashes of colour, either in shape form (like a circle or a heart) or in long lines vertically placed side by side. We were inspired to use her style of art to create several art pieces with the Owl class and concluded the art exploration with a quilt of hearts using rainbow coloured paper and collages when placed side by side, represented a friendship quilt. We also saw in the book a page dedicated to Josephine Baker, a black singer whose CD I (Lisa) just happened to own, and have in the classroom. We painted, we coloured with pastels, and we glued (collage) small pieces of paper in Alma Thomas' art style, while listening to the music of Josephine Baker.



Learning about Black History Month Through Art and Music Continued...

by Lisa Labere and Vivian Ip (ECEs)

Alma Thomas became a famous artist at 80 years of age, after having been an art teacher for many years. She achieved success despite segregation and the prejudices of her time. She is quite possibly the first African American woman to even gain a Bachelor's Degree in Art.

After learning about Alma Woodsey Thomas, we introduced the Owl classroom children to another African American Artist named Stanley Whitney. In interviews, Stanley Whitney has said he paints while listening to the music of Miles Davis. And so we did also! He is known for his use of a loose grid of highly saturated colours in his paintings.² Like a bricklayer, he begins each painting with a horizontal line along the paper. And so, the children also began each artwork with several horizontal lines before using pastels to make their boxes along each line.

February's theme focuses on friendship, emotions, and what kindness means. We chose to celebrate Black History Month by introducing the children to a couple of artists and musicians, and we hope that you might be inspired to google a few as well; expanding your knowledge. Black History Month and celebrating kindness seem to go hand in hand; knowing we may not all look like each other or even speak the same language or even hear in the same way (with devices or without) but we do need to all be kind to each other. A lesson we can all benefit from and one that's so important, especially in the early years.

There are so many incredible black artists and musicians and we hope that our art projects and this article inspires you to get out there and learn more about them!

Citations:

1. Alma Thomas in 6 Facts and 10 Colorful Abstract Paintings. (2020, November 7). The Collector. <https://www.thecollector.com/alma-thomas-abstract-painting/>

2. Sheets, H. M. (2021, October 29). Stanley Whitney Dances With Matisse. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/29/arts/design/stanley-whitney-lisson-gallery.html>



Book of the Month: Not a Box

by Antoinette Portis (Author and Illustrator)

Is a box just a box? Not to the creative imagination of a little bunny. This beautifully illustrated picture book uses humor and simple language to demonstrate the power of imaginative play.

Much of the inspiration for this book came from the author's own memory of playing in a box in her driveway with her sister. If we think back to our own childhood, we can probably all recall a time or two when we transformed mundane everyday objects into something spectacular with just the power of our imagination!

Key Takeaways:

- Promotes imaginative play and encourages kids to think outside the box (pun intended)
- Teaches kids about recycling and finding ways to repurpose items that may commonly end up in the trash or recycling bin.
- Try reading the book aloud and then drawing shapes like a square or a circle and asking your child what the shape is NOT!
- This book works well with our March theme "up in the air" as we will be transforming boxes into hot air balloons and airplanes.





Kindergarten Mainstream Transition Information Session

Please join us for an informative evening hosted by our Itinerant Team Lead, Jessica Costello to address your child's transition into mainstream schooling.

Our Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Early Childhood Educators will shed light on the process, answer any questions you may have, and help you make a more informed decision about your child's education.

All are welcome to attend this information session, however, it is highly encouraged for families who's child will be transitioning into mainstream schooling next year.

Event Details

Thursday, March, 30, 2023 | 5 PM- 6 PM

Zoom (Link: <https://ca01web.zoom.us/j/6533435695?pwd=cTh4em5CT1JDTDBNWjNXeGRaSON0QT09>)

Please RSVP to info@childrenshearing.ca



Audiology News

by Christine Chan (Audiologist)

Self advocacy is speaking up for one’s needs. For our early learners, self advocacy can start with steps toward ownership of their devices and recognizing listening environments.

In the next couple of months I will be working in pairs or groups to teach the children about the parts of their devices and the importance of wearing the devices. I will discuss recognizing good listening situations and how to fix bad ones, and play a game about the parts of the ear and hearing in the brain. I look forward to journeying along with the children as they learn and grow in self advocacy.

Up In The Air

by Rita Francis (SLP)



© Rita SLP

Up in the Air!

Make a Scene.

- Print out one copy each page (use cardstock if available). If you are using the black and white pages, your child can help to colour in the pictures.
- Cut out the individual pictures and arrange them on the table in front of you and your child.
- Take turns choosing pictures to place onto the background page to make a scene together. Talk about what is happening and where the pictures are going!

Barrier Game.

- Print out two copies of each page (two backgrounds and two picture pages- use cardstock if available). If you are using the black and white pages, your child can help to colour in the pictures.
- Cut out the individual pictures. Give one background page and one set of pictures to your child, and keep another set for yourself.
- Sit across from each other and set up a "barrier" between you. You could use a large book, a box, or even a file folder- anything to block the other person's view so you can keep your page a secret!
- Take turns giving instructions about where to put the pictures into the scene. The goal is to make your pictures look the same, so it will be important to give clear instructions!
- Check in after each instruction to make sure your pictures match.

Have fun!

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