Dear CDC-PCC Families and Friends,

Teacher Appreciation Week is in full swing and our lounge was filled with scrumptious goodies all day on Tuesday! Thursday is flower day and Friday is the luncheon potluck. It’s not too late to sign up. I know that our teachers greatly appreciate your sentiments and support. Thanks for making this an extra special week for them!

Have you checked out our staff baby pictures in the lobby? Stop by and see if you can guess who’s who!

There will not be a weekly newsletter sent next week as I’ll be in Chicago Tuesday-Saturday, attending an early childhood conference: http://cecl.nl.edu/training/lc.htm I have never attended this conference before and am really looking forward to it. I’ll be traveling with the Director of Programs from Long Beach Day Nursery, and look forward to collaborating with her, and other colleagues. If you need assistance in my absence, please contact Alec Colchico, Center Manager at CDC-LAC at 562/938-4703 or via email acolchico@lbcc.edu. Linda and Soledad will also be in the office next week.

Our Art Show flyer is available here: http://www.lbcc.edu/ChildrenCenter/documents/2012%20CDC%20art%20Show%20Invite.pdf Wait until you see what the children have been working on!

Set up will occur on Sunday, 5/20 at approximately 10:30 AM. As always, we rely on your support to make our special events successful. If you are available to help us with set up, we would greatly appreciate it. Please meet us in the PCC lobby and help us transform this space into a gallery!

We are also looking to borrow the following items:

- Fresh flowers and vases to place throughout the lobby. Do you have some to share from your garden to help enhance our environment? If so, please bring them to us on 5/21 or anytime throughout that week.
- Easels! We need lots and lots and lots to display our artwork.
- Plain tablecloths/fabric to assist us with setting up the exhibit and creating displays.

All of these items will be returned to you on 5/25. As always, you can earn Parent Hours for all time spent volunteering at the CDC, donations, etc. Please contact me if you have any questions and/or let me know if you can help us make the children’s art exhibition into a grand success!

The wooden alligator drum that we purchased with the LBCC Foundation grant and fundraising dollars from our pie sale has been installed in Pod en Fuego. I have attached photos to this email. We are very excited to have expanded our sound garden into the Toddler playground. A great big thanks to the Foundation for providing us w/ matching dollars to buy this and to all of you that bought and sold Thanksgiving pies!

This weekend is Mother’s Day and I have cut and pasted one of my favorite essays about parenting by author Anna Quindlen. Have a fantastic weekend! Here’s to living in the moment:

All my babies are gone now. I say this not in sorrow but in disbelief. I take great satisfaction in what I have today: three adults, two taller than I am, one closing in fast. Three people who read the same books I do and have learned not to be afraid of disagreeing with me in their opinion of them, who sometimes tell vulgar jokes that make me laugh until I choke and cry, who need razor blades and shower gel and privacy, who want to keep their doors closed more than I like. Who, miraculously, go to the bathroom, zip up their jackets and move food from plate to mouth all by themselves. Like the trick soap I bought for the bathroom with a rubber ducky at its center, the baby is buried deep within each, barely discernible except through the unreliable haze of the past.

Everything in all the books I once poured over is finished for me now. Penelope Leach., T. Berry Brazelton. Dr. Spock. The one quiet codicil for an 18-month old who did not walk.

Raising children is presented at first as a true-false test, then becomes multiple choice, until finally, far along, you realize that it is an endless essay. No one knows anything. One child responds well to positive reinforcement, another can be managed only with a stern voice and a timeout. One child is toilet trained at 3, his sibling at 2.

When my first child was born, parents were told to put baby to bed on his belly so that he would not choke on his own spit-up. By the time my last arrived, babies were put down on their backs because of research on sudden infant death syndrome. To a new parent this ever-shifting certainty is terrifying, and then soothing. Eventually you must learn to trust yourself. Eventually the research will follow.

I remember 15 years ago poring over one of Dr. Brazelton’s wonderful books on child development, in which he describes three different sorts of infants: average, quiet, and active. I was looking for a sub-quiet codicil for an 18-month old who did not walk.
Was there something wrong with his fat little legs? Was there something wrong with his tiny little mind? Was he developmentally delayed, physically challenged? Was I insane? Last year he went to China. Next year he goes to college. He can talk just fine. He can walk, too.

Every part of raising children is humbling, too. Believe me, mistakes were made. They have all been enshrined in the, “Remember-When- Mom-Did Hall of Fame.” The outbursts, the temper tantrums, the bad language, mine, not theirs. The times the baby fell off the bed. The times I arrived late for preschool pickup. The nightmare sleepover. The horrible summer camp. The day when the youngest came barreling out of the classroom with a 98 on her geography test, and I responded, ”What did you get wrong?” (She insisted I include that.) The time I ordered food at the McDonald’s drive-through speaker and then drove away without picking it up from the window. (They all insisted I include that.) I did not allow them to watch the Simpsons for the first two seasons. What was I thinking?

But the biggest mistake I made is the one that most of us make while doing this. I did not live in the moment enough. This is particularly clear now that the moment is gone, captured only in photographs. There is one picture of the three of them, sitting in the grass on a quilt in the shadow of the swing set on a summer day, ages 6, 4 and 1. And I wish I could remember what we ate, and what we talked about, and how they sounded, and how they looked when they slept that night. I wish I had not been in such a hurry to get on to the next thing: dinner, bath, book, bed. I wish I had treasured the doing a little more and the getting it done a little less.

Even today I’m not sure what worked and what didn’t, what was me and what was simply life. When they were very small, I suppose I thought someday they would become who they were because of what I’d done. Now I suspect they simply grew into their true selves because they demanded in a thousand ways that I back off and let them be. The books said to be relaxed and I was often tense, matter-of-fact and I was sometimes over the top. And look how it all turned out. I wound up with the three people I like best in the world, who have done more than anyone to excavate my essential humanity. That’s what the books never told me. I was bound and determined to learn from the experts. It just took me a while to figure out who the experts were.

Sincerely,
Stacey

Save The Dates:
Thursday, 5/24 Open House and Children’s Art Exhibition
Friday, 5/25 Pony Rides & Petting Zoo and the last day of school for children enrolled in C2 and D1*
Friday, 5/25 Last day for children enrolled in C2 and D1
Monday, 5/28 Memorial Day – CDC closed
Tuesday, 5/29 Summer session begins
Friday, 8/17 Last day for children leaving for kindergarten □
Monday, 8/20 2012-2013 school year begins