

Baby Gator Tales

Volume 1, Issue 1
July 2010

Dr. Pamela Pallas, Director



Director's Message

Dear Parents,

We are pleased to be able to bring you the Baby Gator newsletter, *Baby Gator Tales*, once again. Many thanks go to Carol Flowers, the Village Drive Office Manager, for reviving a long-standing Baby Gator tradition.

Baby Gator Tales will be another way for the Baby Gator staff to share Baby Gator activities and plans with you and invite you to share your thoughts and suggestions with us.

This year both centers have enjoyed a variety of activities with families in their classrooms and families from both centers got together for an anniversary potluck supper celebration. We hope to plan many more activities for all our families. And you will read all about it here in *Baby Gator Tales* which will be e-mailed to you quarterly.

Happy reading!

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Sharing information with parents is an important component of the Baby Gator program. We know that young children's learning is a joint effort of the center and their home. To support and promote children's optimal development, Baby Gator strives to establish relationships with families based on mutual trust and respect and to involve families in children's educational activities.

Lesson Plan Themes

July

Passport Around the World - Exploring Countries & Cultures



August

Amazing Animals



September

All About Me !



Join us for a Independence Day Celebration Bar-B-Q at Village Drive

Parents - please join us at Baby Gator at Village Drive for an old-fashioned Bar-B-Q on Friday July 2nd from 11am -1pm. Chef Lynn will be cooking hamburgers and hotdogs on the grill to serve with baked beans, potato salad, and fresh fruit. The children will be making desserts. The cost for each adult is \$5.00. Please sign up in the office and pay in cash by Wednesday June 30th to help us plan for sufficient quantities. Lunch is served in Little Gators Caterpillars, Butterflies, and Grasshoppers at 11:30am. Growing Gators eat at 11:45 and Future Gators eat at 12noon.



Tiny Gator / Little Gator June Activities

As the temperatures heat up, water is such fun to have as a central theme for the babies. All the sensory experiences from hot/cold cloths to sponge play, and of course just plain splashing our hands and toes in the water, are a thing of delight for all.



Depending upon weather, our activities are outside in our baby nest, inside at the highchairs or on the floor. Water day will continue to carry on throughout the summer as we look forward to "Passport Around the World" in July.



Multiculturalism is a focus during July and we would greatly appreciate you lending or donating any fun pictures or artifacts from various countries - books, music, sensory fabrics, or other items. We would also like to hang a hat rack displaying baby hats from around the world.

If you have anything to contribute, please let us know. We look forward to learning more about various cultures.

Last but not least, we would like to welcome Omri and Maggie to our Tiny Gator class. We look forward to our family events which are great opportunities to get to know each other. Sadly, we have had to say goodbye to Jude who has moved away with his family. We will miss him greatly.

Just a friendly reminder

- ♥ Sign your child in and out with your full name each day!
- ♥ Wash your hands when entering ALL classrooms!
- ♥ Label ALL items with first and last name!
- ♥ Sun block and bug spray (If desired), hat and outdoor shoes for older children!
- ♥ Check child folders daily

June theme was
"Water Water Everywhere"!

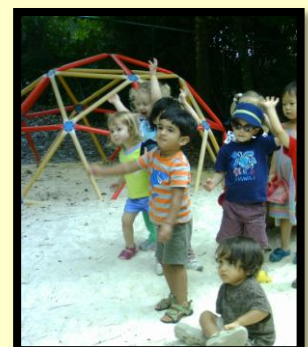


In June the Caterpillars class painted with blue ice, made skiescapes, explored blue jello in a bag and created ocean art with sand and seashells.

The Butterflies class now has a coral reef mural and a tropical fish tank thanks to Miss Kim and parents who donated fish. Water Day is such fun !



The Grasshoppers learned about different species of fish and their habitats, made ocean play dough, and read ocean-themed books.



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Growing Gators / Future Gators June Activities

Even Percy the rabbit got into the water experience with a bath!



The Growing Gators walked to Lake Alice, learned the Five Little Speckled Frog song, and painted with colored ice cubes. The children learned about beaches and life in the salt water environment.



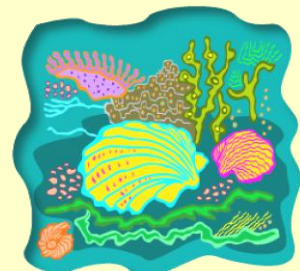
Keep your family safe this summer by following these tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).
<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/summertips.cfm>



Upcoming Events at Village Drive

- ◆ July 4th Bar-B-Q
- ◆ Summer Camp for Children with Special Needs July 12th through August 13th
- ◆ UF Fall Classes begin August 23rd
- ◆ CLOSED Monday July 5th
- ◆ CLOSED Monday Sept 6th

The Future Gators read Rainbow Fish and created a rainbow fish collage. The children learned new vocabulary such as reef, sea weed, coral, current, tide, and the names of different fish species. The children spent some “campfire time” with their Dad’s for Father’s Day and enjoyed many water days during the month of June.



Tiny Gators / Little Gators June Activities

June is the beginning of summer and our Tiny Gators did several interesting activities during this month such as a Father's Day art project, finger painting, exploring texture, reading books and doing sign language for the infants, listening to multicultural music and nursery rhymes, nature walks, and water exploration. The babies really enjoy water-related activities and water day every Friday during the summer brings lots of smiles.



In June Little Gators learned all about water. Some children made special music by vibrating cups with different amounts of water. One sensory activity was ice cube play. Art activities included puff painting fish, making streamer jellyfish, and creating an ocean boat mural. Other children built sand castles, made a cloud and rain picture, had sink and float water play, created handprint sand dollars, and made a tornado in a bottle.

Little Gators Manatees, Beavers and Otters are celebrating the sunshine and warm weather! We have been exploring topics such as the wetlands, picnics, water, fruits and vegetables, as well as how our bodies change and grow.



We're also excited to announce that the children are now brushing their teeth as part of our daily routine in the LG 2 classroom. We hope that this will help encourage self-care and independence. Please feel welcome to visit us anytime and check out what our classrooms are up to for the rest of the summer!

Growing Gators / Future Gators June Activities



The Growing Gators and Future Gators are having a very busy summer! In June we planned our lessons with a water theme. We talked about the differences between salt and fresh water animals and what kinds of water we have in Florida. We made our own edible ponds out of bagels, blue cream cheese, lettuce, and goldfish crackers. We even "fished" for the letters in our names. The highlight of our water theme was our field trip to a creek and pond on the UF campus. Everyone was very excited to see a real alligator! Throughout the summer we will have Water Days every Friday, and children can run through sprinklers, splash in wading pools, and use water animals and toys in our water tables.

Upcoming Events at Newell Drive

◆ CLOSED Monday July 5th

July marks the beginning of our multicultural exploration. We will be learning about the countries and cultures of Baby Gator families, including India, Korea, Russia, Australia, China, Canada, Japan, and of course the United States. We hope to include authentic clothing, games, and musical instruments. If we are very lucky, maybe some parents will come in and talk to us, too!



In August we will see some big changes to the GG/FG rooms. Our transitions will be complete, and two of our classrooms will start the official VPK year. We are so excited to meet the new children coming to our rooms, whether they have been here a long time already or are brand new to the center. We wish the kindergarteners a wonderful year. They will be missed, but the fun will always continue at Baby Gator!



New Students

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Please welcome our newest students at Village Drive ---

Tiny Gators: **Omri and Maggie**

Little Gators Caterpillars: **Samuel, Desmond, and Sidni**

Growing Gators: **LeeHee**

Please welcome our newest students at Newell Drive ---

Tiny Gators: **John, Eden, Sophia, and Karsten**



New Teachers

Lisa Forrest - Little Gators Butterflies at Village Drive



Lisa joined Baby Gator in June of 2010 and has over 7 years of experience in child care. She graduated from Manhattanville College with a Bachelor's degree in Sociology, Psychology and Studio Art. Lisa's degree also includes childhood development courses. She enjoys cooking, volunteering, knitting, listening to music, and spending time with her family and friends. Lisa brings songs and sounds to the classroom and will be a great asset to Baby Gator.

Ashley Auplant - Little Gators 2 at Newell Drive



Ashley joined Baby Gator in June of 2010. She is currently working towards a Bachelor's degree in Sociology with a Minor in American History from the University of Florida. Ashley comes to Baby Gator with over 3 years experience working with young children. Ashley loves singing and incorporating music in all forms into her classroom. In her spare time she enjoys spending time with her family, reading and singing.



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Please welcome **Amber McMillan**, who will start July 6th in Little Gators 1 at Newell Drive.

Looking for something fun to do this summer with your children? Visit the Discovery Room at the Florida Museum of Natural History.

We're on the Web!
www.babygator.ufl.edu

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