



Baby Gator Tales

Director's Message

Dear Baby Gator families:
 Baby Gator now enrolls over 300 children. Unfortunately, there are still almost 300 children on the waiting lists so we continue to look for new ways to expand our services and support more UF families. Baby Gator Summer Camp has been a great success. The children (and their teachers) are exploring lots of new places in-between water play and picnic lunches. The Camp enabled us to create 40 openings in the Lake Alice and Newell Drive centers. We have also been working hard to develop a Baby Gator center at PK Yonge Developmental Research School. Baby Gator at PKY will open August 13, 2012 and will enroll 20 three- and four-year-olds and 20 Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) children. Children of all UF students, staff, and faculty are eligible to enroll. The

Center's hours will be 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, and will follow the UF calendar. Our next project will be a Baby Gator at Diamond Village. Baby Gator is currently working with the Department of Housing and Residence Education to develop a Baby Gator within the Diamond Village family housing complex. Renovated apartments will provide classrooms for preschoolers as well as much needed office space for Baby Gator administration and support staff. Target date for opening is fall 2012. We can't forget the existing centers and their needs! We hope to begin playground renovations at both Lake Alice and Newell in the early fall, adding natural play areas with more grass, water play features, and gardens. We'll keep you updated as we grow! Your support and patience are greatly appreciated.

Baby Gator Child Development and Research Center at the University of Florida

June 2012
 Volume 3, Issue 1

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Lesson Plan Themes

July

Passport Around the World: Exploring Countries and Cultures



August

Amazing Animals: Exploring Unique and Interesting Animals



September

All About Me: Back to Basics



Lake Alice —Tiny Gators

We have had an exciting and fun filled past couple of months! In March, we "Marched through Literacy"! We explored different instruments like drums, Morocco's and a piano. We even went on a walk to the Bauman Center where we were able to listen to the organ and dance! We also had fun watching puppets tell us stories about "Goldie Locks and the Three Bears" and "The Hungry, Hungry Caterpillar". Our children love listening to stories and picking out their own books for us to read!

During the month of April our theme was "Watch us Grow". We learned about all things that grow and what makes things grow. Some of our exciting activities involved painting with leaves, ripping tissue paper and sticking it to contact paper to make sun catchers (this was a great sensory activity) and we discovered the different texture between soil and sand! Ending our theme for the month, we got to take a walk to the "Front Garden" and see all of the beautiful flowers, vegetables and even blueberry bushes that our older friends have planted. The children in Sweetpeas class took turns helping water the plants.

We began the month of May celebrating movement!! This theme included all things that have to do with movement, from our bodies to forms of transportation. We had a "Super" PHIT Kids week where we set up an obstacle course, practiced tip-toeing and stomping and walking backwards! We also pushed cars and trucks around the room and up and down ramps. During water play they watched boats float and had fun dumping and pouring water! Lastly, we did fun painting

activities with rolling pins, brushes and our hands to see all the different movements each makes!

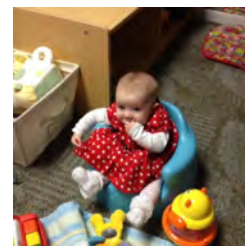
In June, we are exploring all things having to do with water!! To start off the water fun we will have a water day every Friday!! This will include inside and outside activities! We will incorporate water activities into lesson plan each week! We are looking forward to cooling down in the summer heat!!

Special thanks to all the parents who contributed to our "Teacher Appreciation" week! We are so grateful to work with such wonderful children and families!

A few friendly reminders:

- ~Please label all of your child's belongings with FIRST and LAST name
 - ~Please sign your child in and out daily
 - ~ Check the white board posted outside of our classroom daily for information
 - ~Make sure your child has sunscreen, bathing suit, swim diaper and towel every Friday
- Looking forward to a fun summer!

Your teachers,
Robin, Drew, Linda and Ethel



Lake Alice—Little Gators 1: Tiger Lilies

Greetings from the Tiger Lilies!



We have been very busy this spring with reading stories, outdoor exploration, art and music.

In March, our theme was "Marching through Literacy: Exploring Literacy and Language Development". We read our favorite stories, poems and listened to stories on our classroom CD player. We also read in English and Spanish. The Tiger Lilies already have developed an appreciation for books so this month was very enjoyable for our classroom.

In April, our theme was "Watch Us Grow: Celebrating the Start of Spring". We did a whole month on life cycles from plants to animals and learned about how we grow. We caught a caterpillar, named him "Butta", and the children were fascinated watching him move around in the home that we made

for him. We also measured our Tiger Lilies once at the beginning of the month and again at the end of the month to see how much they grew. Lastly, in April the Tiger Lilies enjoyed the first Easter egg hunt to take place within the center.

In May, our theme was "Marvelous Month of Movement: Exploring Movement and the Body". We did a lot of dancing, exercising and talking about body parts. We enjoyed sports (bowling, soccer, basketball), danced to music from the 80's to the present, went on walks and enjoyed the fresh air. This month has been great fun especially since we started water day! Until the Next Time,



Lake Alice—Little Gators 1: Orange Blossoms & Sunflowers



Hello to all of our parents. We have been so busy these last 3 months. In March we had a blast jumping into literacy by reading all of our favorite books. We explored fairy tales and got to act them out through dramatic play with beads and scarves.

In April, the theme was "Watch Us Grow," so the Sunflower and Orange Blossom classes teamed up and planted a variety of veggies, flowers, and blueberry bushes that are now a part of the Baby Gator garden. We would like to give a special thank-you to Mrs. Chi for donating both the plants and her time to getting our section of the garden started. The children had a great time helping plant and water the seedlings. The children also got to enjoy an egg hunt that was

made possible through the generosity of our parents. Thank-you all for your help.

During the month of May we explored different types of movement. We sampled everything from yoga and stretching to walking and running. We also talked about how movement has a positive effect on our hearts, muscles, and bones. Miss Lisa would like to welcome all of our new friends to the Sunflower class. It is always wonderful to get new children. Last but not least, we were very happy about all of our super moms that came to our Mother's Day celebration. I hope you all enjoyed yourselves.



Once again, thanks for all you do.

Sunflower and Orange Blossom team

Baby Gator in the news:



GNV welcomed 19 5-year-olds from UF's Baby Gator Preschool. After studying aviation, the class toured the terminal and got a closer look at a regional jet and Gainesville Fire Rescue's airport fire trucks.

Lake Alice—Little Gators 2: Dandelions

Greetings everyone!

The Dandelions kicked off the month of March with the theme of literacy. We dedicated the entire month to Dr. Seuss, Eric Carle, and various nursery rhymes. During the week of Dr. Seuss' birthday we celebrated each day by wearing something related to his book. Monday was silly hat day, Tuesday was silly sock day. Everyone wore



their cozy pj's Wednesday on pajama day, Thursday was mismatch day and Friday (Dr. Seuss's birthday) we wore stripes and red and black. We also had a birthday party for Dr. Seuss, made and decorated cupcakes, and sang "Happy Birthday" to him!

In April, the Dandelion classroom explored the different aspects of spring. The children decorated eggs for their Easter egg hunt. The Dandelions love learning, but one topic they really enjoy discussing is the weather. The children used their five senses

to learn about the weather and planet earth, incorporating these lessons in their circle time and group activities. Next, the children learned about flowers and the various types that bloom in spring. The teachers created a matching game using spring flowers, and a touch and feel box of different flowers. The children learned how flowers



have many colors and shapes. We associate growth and new life with spring so the children learned about the animals and insects that are seen during the spring season.



We were in constant motion during the "Month of Movement" in May. The Dandelions and Magnolias celebrated Mother's Day by having a muffin party with Mom! We enjoyed spending time socializing and eating delicious muffins the children worked so hard to make. During our week of transportation, the Dandelions went on their first field trip to the Butterfly Museum! We sang "The Wheels on the Bus" while actually



riding the bus! Then we walked through a beautiful garden full of butterflies, flowers, birds, and plants. Continuing with the transportation theme, we had a fun and sticky time creating edible cars out of crackers, pretzels, M&Ms, and peanut butter.

We couldn't have done any of this without the parents' involvement as well as contributions to our class activities and materials. Thank you, so much. We appreciate all your help.

"We need to remember that children are trying, too - trying to understand their feelings and their world, trying to please the people they love, trying to grow. When grownups and children are trying together, just about anything can be possible."

Fred Rogers

Lake Alice—Little Gators 2: Magnolias

Hello All,

The last couple of months have been filled with excitement! In February, we spent the month exploring emotions. We discovered the different ways art, music, nature and our friends make us feel. We went for a walk to the student garden and walked the trails around Lake Alice. We danced to happy music and we danced to sad music. The final week



of February, we talked about expressing our emotions through art; we looked at paintings from famous artists and talked about how the paintings made us feel. We finished off the month with a trip to

the Harn Museum of Art! Thank you to all the parents who chaperoned on this field trip!

During March we celebrated our favorite authors! Weeks one and two were filled with stories written by Dr. Seuss! We practiced counting and stacking turtles as we read "Yertle the Turtle,". We measured our feet and read "The Foot Book" and we discussed the importance of recycling and preservation of

our planet as we read "The Lorax."

Later in the month, we read the famous work of Eric Carle and ended our month with activities focused around of class's favorite books.



In April, we rang in the spring season! We started our garden that is flourishing in the front of our school. We watched seeds grow into plants and talked about where the fruits and vegetables we eat come from. We even had a taste testing party; we tasted different fruits and vegetables and made a graph showing our favorites!



The month of May was all about movement. We spent two weeks talking about sports and the way our bodies move. We had a surfing party, practiced baseball, we even played soccer at Cory Village! We also explored different modes of transportation. We played "red light, green light", flew paper airplanes and went on a walk around campus pretending to be on a

train. At the end of May, we tied sports and transportation together by going on a field trip! We took a bus to Ben Hill Griffin Stadium and The O'Connell Center. We talked all about Gator sports and of course, practiced singing our Gator songs. Thanks to all the parents who helped us with that field trip! Go Gators!

We have had a busy and exciting few months. The Magnolia teachers are having a blast with our new students and we are thrilled to be making new memories with them!

Thanks!



Tyler "Tebowing"

Lake Alice—Growing Gators: Grasshoppers

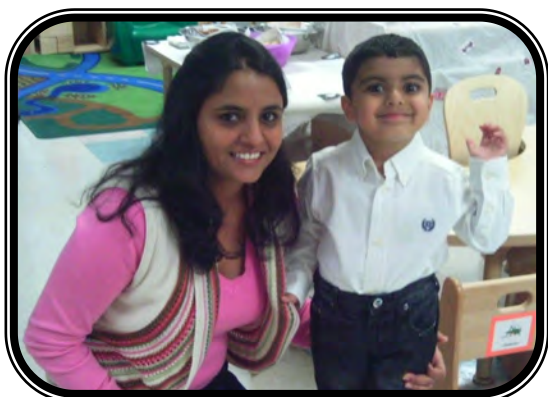
Cheers from the Grasshoppers!

In January, we explored All Things Cold, the season of winter, different kinds of weather events, and Arctic Animals.

In February, we used the theme—All You Need is Love to talk about friendships and doing kind things. We also celebrated Valentine's Day with a Sock Hop. Parents and Grasshoppers had fun dressing up in 50's attire, dancing to the oldies and eating diner food. It was a Rockin Good time!

In March, the Grasshoppers enjoyed "Marching through Literacy" by celebrating Dr. Seuss' birthday. We read lots of Dr. Seuss books and celebrated his wit by dressing up in silly socks, silly hats, and even had a backwards/mismatch day and pajama day.

April made the Grasshoppers busy little bees celebrating spring with all kinds of artistic and fun activities. We learned about the seasons, nature and how things grow. We used our "green" thumbs and planted our very own garden filled with corn, beets, okra, carrots, onions and watermelon. Check out the sunflowers we planted too—they're bigger than all of the Grasshoppers! To help celebrate Earth Day we learned about recycling and being kind to "Mother Earth". The G-HOPS hosted a reception to kick-off the "Junk Evolution" art exhibition that featured our unique environmental, nature and waste-based creations. Our art creations were also featured at the Harn Art Museum where we had an opportunity to show our art work along with several elementary schools. This was a big thrill for us since the Harn has never invited preschoolers to participate in an art show before. YOU GO GRASSHOPPERS! A big thanks to our parents who joined us on our fieldtrip to the Harn.



In May, the Grasshoppers explored moving our bodies—we played different kinds of sports, exercised, danced and moved our bodies in different and fun ways. We created beautiful works of art in the style of Jackson Pollack. Also in May and in appreciation for our mothers, we made several special handmade gifts.

Coming soon, we're looking forward to having some summer fun focusing on Water, Water Everywhere, Passport Around the World and Amazing Animals. Stay tuned for details...



"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up." - Pablo Picasso

When my daughter was about seven years old, she asked me one day what I did at work. I told her I worked at the college - that my job was to teach people how to draw. She stared at me, incredulous, and said, "You mean they forget?" - Howard Ikemoto

Lake Alice—Growing Gators: Bumblebees

The Bumble Bees had a great time this year learning and exploring in their classroom. The children have many talents which they apply throughout their activities and lessons.

This past fall, Bumble Bees collected pinecones and turned them into eco-friendly bird feeders. The Fall Festival was buzzing with excitement from the activities like the face painting, apple Jack-o-Lanterns; and popcorn witches hands that all the children enjoyed.

Our class had a successful fieldtrip to the Florida Museum of Natural History where the children learned about ancient animals long extinct that used to live here in Florida, Native Americans and their customs, and the extensive collection of butterflies.



In December the Bumble Bees displayed their musical talents as they explored music and instruments from around the world. The children put on a wonderful concert to celebrate the many holidays the winter has to offer.

This spring the class went on three field trips around the University campus. The first was to the old Natural History museum where the children were invited to see the octopus have her lunch, hold some jumpy toads, and listened to the musical talents of the staff singing about the

forest animals. The second field trip was to the University Auditorium to experience one of the largest Pipe Organs in the Southeast United States. The performing arts students played some impressive music for us as our class enjoyed a picnic next to Century Tower.

The third trip the Bumble Bees had this spring was to Library West as part of our month theme on literacy. The class got to experience what it is like to be a Librarian for the day and checked out their own books and moved the shelves with the touch of a button.



Our class took a closer look at how things grow including insects, plants and ourselves. Starting from seeds the children planted, watered and took excellent care of their spring garden every day and made observations about the growth they saw.

Marvelous Month of Movement was the theme for May where, through song and the help of Mr. Bones (our class skeleton), the children were able to identify a few bones in their bodies while learning what makes their bodies move. The Bumble Bees worked very hard to make gifts while our Bumble Bee dads took the time to read to our class stories about mothers to celebrate our marvelous mothers this May.

We want to thank all the parents and volunteers who participated in our school events throughout the year. By showing interest in your child's education you have made what we do at Baby Gator more valuable and we appreciate your enthusiasm. Your encouragement and reinforcement will boost your child's self-esteem as well as help to stimulate future creative development and learning curiosity.



Lake Alice—Growing Gators: Dragonflies



Oh what fun we've had as Dragonflies this Spring! Just like the seasons, we have changed and learned so much in the process.

For the month of March we delved right into literacy and went to the library where we learned many things including how to check out books!

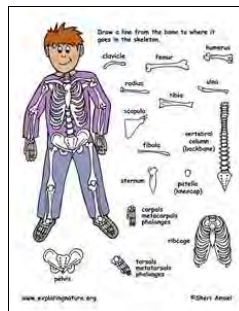
In April we sprouted just like our fruit and vegetable garden which is filled with onions, lima beans, even watermelons! We're yet waiting to see how they come out!



Baby Gator children at the Reading Festival
April 10, 2012



In the month of May we started preparing for the big changes that were to come. We discovered how the bones in our body work and grow as we do the same!



Timeless Wisdom From Fred Rogers

"Children have their own unique ways of relating to books, reading, and words...When we let them know we appreciate it when they take small steps along the way to reading and writing, we're building a sturdy foundation for a child who will go off to kindergarten wanting to learn...about reading and writing and anything else in this world."



Growing Gators & Future Gators "hanging out" on the playground

Upcoming Events/Closings at Lake Alice

- ◆ July 4, 2012 closed for Independence Day
- ◆ July 25, 2012 Multi-cultural Potluck 6:00-7:00pm
- ◆ August—date t.b.d. VPK Parent Meeting
- ◆ September 3, 2012 closed for Labor Day
- ◆ September 4, 2012 VPK program starts
- ◆ September 29, 2012 Family Field Day

Upcoming Events/Closings at Newell Drive

- ◆ July 4, 2012 closed for Independence Day
- ◆ July 27, 2012 Multi-cultural Potluck 11:30am-1:00pm
- ◆ August—date t.b.d. VPK Parent Meeting
- ◆ September 3, 2012 closed for Labor day
- ◆ September 4, 2012 VPK program starts
- ◆ September 29, 2012 Family Field Day

Lake Alice—Future Gators: Fireflies



Gator Women's Basketball Facility tour

Hello to all from the Firefly room!

We have been busy as usual with field trips, parties, and of course brain-building activities. Some highlights have been our amazing field trips to the Library West ReadFest, exclusive Gator Women's Basketball Facility tour, Butterfly Rainforest journey, hands-on visit to the WUFT studio, and "Tot-Time" at the Harn Museum of Art.



Inside the Butterfly Rainforest

And who could forget about our April Graduation in Norman Auditorium? Our children walked in the processional to "Pomp and Circumstance", sang beautiful songs, and received their diplomas. In attendance were families, friends, and Baby Gator and Human Resource Staff. There was not a dry eye in the house.



Singing at Graduation

Our children work hard and play hard, and we have had some very special parties to celebrate holidays and events. March was our St. Patrick's Party where we were visited by Seamus the Leprachaun, April held our Senior Carnival in honor of the graduating children, and we had our Parent's Day Party at the end of May in honor of all the family support we have had during the year.

The children have honed their fine and gross motor skills, learned to think critically and creatively, and become more confident in who they are as people and who they are as a classroom unit. They will have much success in Kindergarten.

Ms. Jennifer and Ms. Alex wish our children and families a fond farewell as they head to Summer Camp and Kindergarten after that.

We love and will miss all of you!

Lake Alice—Future Gators: Ladybugs

Greetings from the Ladybug Classroom!

The past several months have been very busy in the Ladybug Classroom. Field trips to Library West, the Read-a-thon, and Lowes Garden Center have kept us moving around campus and town. Our "Senior Prom" and "Senior Carnival" were successful family events here at Baby Gator. Thank you to all the parents who helped and participated in our field trips and special events.

And who could forget our Graduation Ceremony? The kids really enjoyed the rehearsals with the Fireflies and the Tigers (from Newell) and had a blast at the ceremony! The Ladybugs send a special thank you to Ms. Anne for all her help and hard work to make the event a success. The kids still love to sing "Going to Graduate," a special song adapted by Ms. Alex and Ms. Jennifer.



While the VPKers have been busy honing their pre-kindergarten skills, their teachers have been equally busy planning for the future. In June, Baby Gator's first ever Summer Camp began. Ms. Bivy is excited to make the transition to Summer Camp with the children. We will miss this graduating class of 2012, but are happy to welcome the new class of VPK students and a new co-teacher, Ms. Cyndi, who transitioned from the 2-year-old classroom at Newell Drive.

Have a great summer!



Ms. Cyndi

Baby Gator in the news:

Teacher Alex Avelino with the University of Florida's Baby Gator Child Development and Research Center shows VPK students a photograph of themselves during a campus walk around Lake Alice on the UF campus Monday, June 18, 2012. Avelino and teacher Jennifer Lowery, not pictured, took the 16 students out between their lunch and nap time to take a class photo and get some exercise. (Photo by Doug Finger)



Reception for President Machen at Lake Alice

Baby Gator Child Development and Research Center at UF hosted a reception to honor President Machen for his support of Baby Gator and the needs of UF families. Guests toured the newest child development center, the Baby Gator at Lake Alice, and enjoyed food and beverages on the playground.



UF President
Bernie Machen



UF Vice President for
Human Resources
Paula Fussell



President Machen, Stacy Ellis-Thomas, Associate Director for Baby Gator, Jazmin Herbert, Assistant Director for Administration for Baby Gator, Dr. Pamela Pallas, Director of Baby Gator, and Paula Fussell, UF Vice President for Human Resources



UF President Machen and Jazmin Herbert, Assistant Director for Administration for Baby Gator

Baby Gator-Lake Alice Playground Project



Dig Into Our Natural Playground Project!



Young children thrive in educational settings that incorporate elements of the natural world. Nature helps stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving skills and provides year round opportunities for play and learning. - Rusty Keeler, *Natural Playscapes*

Baby Gator is passionate about fostering a long-lasting relationship between the children in their care and the wonders of nature that surround them. One creative way to build upon this appreciation and exploration of nature is through the use of artfully designed Nature Explore Classrooms.

Imagine composing a woodland song on a marimba built for 10 budding Baby Mozarts; building elaborate fantasy forts with blocks and tree limbs of all shapes and sizes; splashing in cool, clear water as it meanders in winding miniature streams and relaxing to the sounds of nature as you sway from colorful hammocks hanging from Nature's Tree House.



Rendering of Infant Playscape

These delightful spaces are designed to:
Create calming spaces by decreasing visual clutter and using natural elements by design;
Provide safe outlets for children to experience purposeful and playful movement;
Foster creative and strategic thinking through play.

To learn more about our natural playground project, please contact Dr. Pamela J. Pallas, Director, Baby Gator Child Development and Research Center, (352) 273-8000, ppallas@ufl.edu.



Parents—please stay tuned for more information on our Lake Alice Playground Project and how you might support it!

Baby Gator—SUMMER CAMP

IT'S THE FIRST ANNUAL SUMMER CAMP AT BABY GATOR AND OH WHAT A JOY IT IS! Where do we even begin with all the fun and exciting field trips we're going on! With the groups, The Adventurers and The Explorers, our journeys are endless ... from the Santa Fe Planetarium celestials to the caves and native homeland of the Indians at the Natural Florida History Museum!

And what would a summer be without water days, movie week, bowling, and Krispy Kreme donuts! With great fun such as this who'd ever want to leave! To Infinity and Beyond!



Newell Drive—Tiny Gators

The youngest children at Baby Gator are in our Tiny Gators classrooms—Hummingbirds, Sandpipers, and Flamingos. Everything is new to these babies so they are constantly learning about



themselves and the world around them.

This spring we focused on movement and our bodies. We did different movement activities like the Hokey Pokey and baby yoga.

We also did parachute play in the classroom which made the toddlers squeal with joy.

This summer we will be learning about different countries and cultures. If you have anything to share of your child's heritage that would be wonderful.



How much sleep do children need? from WebMD

4-12 Months Old: 14 - 15 hours per day

While up to 15 hours is ideal, most infants up to 11 months old get only about 12 hours sleep. Establishing healthy sleep habits is a primary goal during this period, as your baby is now much more social, and his sleep patterns are more adult-like.

Babies typically have three naps and drop to two at around 6 months old, at which time (or earlier) they are physically capable of sleeping through the night. Establishing regular naps generally happens at the latter part of this time frame, as his biological rhythms mature. The midmorning nap usually starts at 9 a.m. and lasts about an hour. The early afternoon nap starts between noon and 2 p.m. and lasts an hour or two. And the late afternoon nap may start from 3 to 5 p.m. and is variable in duration.

1-3 Years Old: 12 - 14 hours per day

As your child moves past the first year toward 18-21 months of age he will likely lose his morning nap and nap only once a day. While toddlers need up to 14 hours a day of sleep, they typically get only about 10.

Most children from about 21 to 36 months of age still need one nap a day, which may range from one to three and a half hours long. They typically go to bed between 7 and 9 p.m. and wake up between 6 and 8 a.m.

3-6 Years Old: 10 - 12 hours per day

Children at this age typically go to bed between 7 and 9 p.m. and wake up around 6 and 8 a.m., just as they did when they were younger. At 3, most children are still napping, while at 5, most are not. Naps gradually become shorter as well. New sleep problems do not usually develop after 3 years of age.

Newell Drive—LG 1's: Sea Turtles A & B

Over the past few Months the Sea Turtles have taken advantage of the nice weather by going on long walks and fieldtrips around campus. The transition from the strollers to the rainbow rope was very exciting for the children.



The children enjoy being able to explore the nature that the University of Florida campus has to offer.

The Sea Turtles love to explore nearby areas on campus. Thus far they have walked to Wilmot Gardens, Bartram-Carr Woods and the Diamond Village playground. To celebrate Valentine's Day, the children flew heart shaped kites (made by the Sea Turtles teachers) at Pony Fields. They had a blast running around and watching the kites in the air.



In the spring time we have practiced our green thumbs by planting tomatoes and peppers. The children have a lot of fun watering the plants and watching them grow.

The Sea Turtles have been working on being more independent by using cups with no lids, dumping out their own food, pottyng, and even cleaning up their cots after naptime. During circle time we have been focusing on colors, numbers, and emotions. It's very exciting to watch the children recognize colors and numbers. The Sea Turtles love to use the emotion chart to express how they are feeling. We have begun water days and other summer activities.

NEWELL DRIVE-LG1—Rainbow Fish

Oh The Places You'll Go

Since our children have all turned two, the Rainbow Fish have been traveling around Gainesville like we own the place. Each month we plan a field trip to enhance our lesson's theme, and every Friday we take a walk around campus to take advantage of all the amazing things right outside our doors.



In February we visited the Baughman Center and attended the Lake Alice center's Prom to celebrate the season of love. March's Literacy theme took us to the downtown library to celebrate Dr. Seuss's Birthday. We heard stories, watched skits and sang songs. In April we attended UF's Earth Day festivities, which included an a cappella music performance and lessons on sustainability and the importance of buying local produce. We purchased some locally grown oranges and enjoyed them on the Reitz Union Lawn. We also took a trip to the Butterfly Rainforest to learn about the life cycle of a butterfly and observe them in a natural habitat. We saw so many different types of butterflies flying around our heads, and some even



landed on us!

Our most recent trips included a bus ride over to the ShandsCair helicopter hangar to get an up close view the helicopters we always see flying overhead, and a walk to the University Police Department to see a patrol car and motorcycles for our unit on transportation. The goal is to have the children instinctually know their way around campus by the time they enroll in their freshman year of college at UF, since we're obviously creating future Gators. We look forward



AUTHORIZED PICK-UP *From the Baby Gator Parent Handbook*

- ◆ *Children will only be released to people listed on the Authorized Pick-Up List.*
- ◆ *Parents may revise the Authorized Pick-Up List at any time.*
- ◆ *In case of an emergency, parents may call and inform the office that a person who is not on the list will pick up the child.*
 - ⇒ *We accept phone requests from parents only. Parents will be asked to provide identifying information.*
 - ⇒ *The new pick-up person will be asked for picture identification.*
 - ⇒ *The pick-up person must be an adult*
- ◆ *Children will not be released to any person who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.*
- ◆ *If an unauthorized person attempts to pick up the child, the child will be held in the classroom or office until a parent or guardian can be contacted.*

NEWELL DRIVE-LG2—Bever, Manatees & Otters

The Otters, Beavers, and Manatees of LG2 at Newell Drive had an exciting field trip to the Santa Fe Zoo!! In preparation, teachers taught the children about the many types of animals they would have the opportunity to see. They made the trip across town in a Gainesville City Bus and then got a glimpse of the Santa Fe campus as they walked from the bus stop to the zoo.



The children had a delicious snack as they geared up to see some exotic animals. They had the pleasure of seeing alligators, tree kangaroos, and monkeys, just to name a few.

Several parents came along for the ride and helped smooth out our plans. We had such a great time, everyone hardly wanted to leave! Special thanks to Angela Cuenca for taking a ton of photos of the trip and making a beautiful hardbound picture book documenting our adventure. Thanks also to all of the parents who helped make the field trip a success by chaperoning. You guys are the best!



There are no seven wonders of the world in the eyes of a child. There are seven million.
—Walt Streightiff



Advertise in Baby Gator Tales

Advertisement space is available in the Baby Gator Tales issues. If you are interested in placing an ad in this newsletter for your business, please contact Carol Flowers at Baby Gator/Lake Alice (carolflowers@ufl.edu) for ad submission forms or information.

All proceeds for ads will go directly to support the children at Baby Gator.



Ad space prices are as follows:

- ◆ Business Card ad: \$25.00
(business card must accompany order)
- ◆ Quarter Page ad: \$50.00
- ◆ Half Page ad: \$75.00
- ◆ Full page ad: \$150.00

Checks only—payable to the University of Florida.
Ads need to be submitted in *.txt, *.rtf, or *.html format.

NEWELL DRIVE - Growing Gators—Lions

It has been an exciting and bittersweet past couple of months in the Growing Gators Lion classroom. We have taken many field trips over the past several months, including a trip to the Physics Building Exhibits, the temporary construction site on Mowry Rd., the UF Student Gardens, and the gardens on Mowry Rd.! We learned about animals, bugs, plants, transportation, and physics. Whew, we sure have been busy. We also said goodbye to a very close friend and long-time Baby Gator student, Sophia. We wish her well at her new school and hope that she visits us often (especially once her baby sister starts attending Baby Gator!).

With the beginning of summer, we also welcome many new changes in the Lion classroom. Our first Water Day was held on Friday, June 15th. The kids are very excited to start the Water Day tradition again! And with that, I would like to welcome the new 2012-2013 Lion class students: Aidyn, Ciaran, Rylan, Kaden, Olivia, Juliette, Elise, Connor, and Zoe! This year is sure to be full of exciting and new adventures. Please feel free to visit and hang out with us. We would love to have you in our classroom!

A Recipe from the Baby Gator International Cookbook

Tri-Color Pasta Salad by Monique Coy

12 oz tri-color rotini pasta
3 Tbsp olive oil
3 Tbsp red wine vinegar
6 oz feta cheese (tomato and basil flavor)
2.25 oz sliced black olives
Parmesan cheese, shredded
Oregano



Cook pasta al dente. Drain pasta thoroughly and allow to cool. Mix in all ingredients except for cheeses. Mix in feta cheese immediately before serving. Top with parmesan cheese.

NEWELL DRIVE - Growing Gators—Tigers

These past few months have been a whirlwind of fun! Our former Tigers have graduated and are off to summer camp! We are very excited about all the changes going on. Graduation was a hit! The Tigers worked really hard practicing their songs and learning the sign language



that went along with each song. Mrs. Cheryl and Ms. Nika are so proud of their Tigers and are going to miss them dearly.

The Tigers went on some exciting trips this spring. We went to the Physics building and explored some amazing science experiments. We also went to the UF gardens and had a blast. We learned about different plants and even got to take one home. We also learned about some exciting things this spring. We learned about the life cycle of a chicken and had chickens come visit us at Baby Gator. We have also learned about different types of movement and the importance of exercising.

The Tigers have had a very fun filled year. They have all grown so much

and matured in to beautiful young ladies and gentlemen.

We are definitely sad to see the Tigers go but we know they will do



amazing work in Kindergarten. With the graduating Tigers leaving, Ms. Nika and Mrs. Cheryl are happy to welcome the new Tigers into their room. They are excited to see what adventures await them for next year.

American Sign Language

by Keri Stacey



I hear and I forget. I see and I remember.
I do and I understand.
~ Chinese Proverb

Since the exciting start of our new full time Baby Gator Sign Language Program in September of 2011, Mrs. Keri has been hard at work integrating and evolving the program daily. Through time spent in the classrooms in lessons and play time Mrs. Keri has already started your child's journey into the world of American Sign Language (ASL)!

In October we familiarized the children with farm animals using songs, stories and activities with ASL. Mrs. Keri's unique brand of educational fun helped teach the children farm animal names and sounds while reinforcing learning with more signs for your child's ever growing sign language vocabulary! Mrs. Keri is always available for questions and has an expanding library of sign language related materials for parents interested in accelerating your child's journey to new and exciting ways to learn! Some of the animals your child may have learned about are the rooster and the owl. Ask them to show you "What is the sign for owl?". You might be amazed! If you would like to learn for yourself ask your friendly neighborhood Sign Language Facilitator, Mrs. Keri!!!



To celebrate the importance of family and friends all year round Mrs. Keri has used song and story to further enhance your child's grasp of American Sign Language during the holidays. Your child learned with signs

about the true value of friendship and family relationships. With all this fun, Mrs. Keri still found time to teach the little ones some very important things too, like rhyming words and increased number recognition! While telling stories and reading books with the children Mrs. Keri was able to demonstrate useful reading strategies for using American Sign Language to highlight spoken vocabulary.

Some of these practices are as follows:

Reading Strategies

- * Have several books with familiar signs on hand.
- * Choose a calm time of day.
- * Select books with characters and actions that repeat.
- * Discuss illustrations that capture the child's interest rather than focusing on the text of the book.
- * Remember to incorporate signs for learning (e.g. IN, OUT, WHERE, BIG, LITTLE) into reading time.
- * Use adaptations strategies (signing on book or child).
- * Recognize and respond to movements the child makes that could be signs or precursors to signs.

In December The Baby Gator Sign Language Program teamed up with the music program to help prepare the children for the 2011 Holiday performance. Mrs. Keri and Mrs. Anne had a lot of fun singing and signing with the children in celebration of the winter holidays. Mrs. Anne and Mrs. Keri were able to collaborate again to prepare the 2012 VPK graduation ceremony. We are very proud of all of our graduating VPK students and we wish them well. We will miss them forever, and we will love them always.

In the spring of 2012 the Sign Language Program was able to offer a Beginner Parent Sign Language class. The class was a huge success and Mrs. Keri is proud to announce that although dates have not been set, she plans to offer another beginner Sign Language class this fall.

The newest addition to the ASL schedule with the children at Baby Gator is the new "Chomp 'n' Chat" sessions. This scheduled session will give Mrs. Keri thirty minutes up to an hour to spend some extra "free time" with the children as they are eating breakfast, lunch or snack. This time will allow for a less structured and more child directed communication experience. Presenting ASL as vocabulary words during a lesson plan, and using ASL during every day conversation are two different ways of presenting ASL as an established language. Mrs. Keri is excited to be able to add this time into her lesson plans.



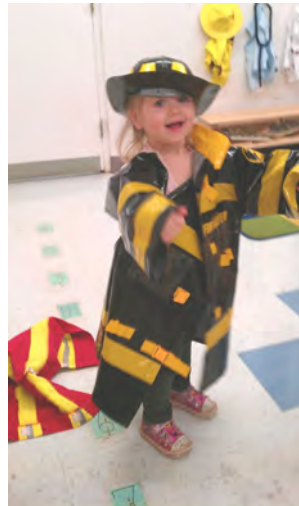


by Nika Lorenz

Since April 2012, Ms. Nika has taken over as the PHIT Kids coordinator at Baby Gator. Ms. Nika is also a VPK teacher at Newell Drive and has a passion for helping children learn how to create a healthy lifestyle. She is having a blast working with your children in the afternoon and watching them learn and grow with each PHITkids activity.



In the month of April, your children learned about fire and sun safety. While learning about sun safety the children got to practice putting on sunscreen and wearing hats and sunglasses. For fire safety the children pretended to be fire fighters and practiced escaping the classroom if there was a fire. The kids also got to experience a really awesome obstacle course and practiced their balance while building their confidence.



In May, Ms. Nika taught lessons about the importance of dance through some wonderful dance parties. The children also learned how to move like different animals and discussed the importance of healthy eating. The kids had a lot of fun learning different yoga poses and pretending to be some interesting animals.



Ms. Nika is looking forward to the months to come and teaching your children about being healthy and having fun.



VPK Enrollment Certificate

Dear VPK Parents and Families,

To enroll your child in the VPK program at Baby Gator, you need to obtain a **CHILD ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT CERTIFICATE (COE)** from the Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County. Please bring the certificate to Baby Gator **by August 1, 2012**.

Contact the VPK Coordinator at ELC with any questions. Their number is:

352-375-4110 ext 124

Love Cookbooks?

Purchase a copy of the Baby Gator International Cookbook for interesting international recipes provided by Baby Gator parents, teachers and staff. The cookbooks are \$10 each and are available in the main office. They make great gifts, too!



Music Program



by Anne Roberts

Summer is a musical time at Baby Gator! During the month of June are exploring books, songs, and movement activities based on the theme "Water Water Everywhere". The children are enjoying singing and moving to "Row, Row, Row Your Boat", "Down by the Bay", and "When I Was One", as well as making up new verses to these favorite songs. All classes are also learning a lot about rhythm and tone quality as they examine and play a variety of rhythm instruments from all over the world.



Later in the summer we will read rhyming stories about the music and culture of other countries and even have a chance to hear some rather unique musical instruments played by guest performers. Many classes will also make their own instruments as they listen to them and have the chance to play them. Music at Baby Gator is a very hands-on activity with much singing, dancing, creative movement and fun!



Please feel free to email me (annemroberts@ufl.edu) if you would like the lyrics to any of the songs your children are singing at home, if you would like links to activities we are doing, or if you would like to share a musical performance with your child's class.

Thank-you again to all the family members who offered to play musical instruments

during music time and I will be getting in touch with you shortly. It is great to have such a variety of talent to choose from!



"When I hear lovely music I feel like I can fly" (Age 6, Hong Kong)

"Kids: they dance before they learn there is anything that isn't music" - William Stafford

"Music is an essential part of everything we do. Like puppetry, music has an abstract quality which speaks to a worldwide audience in a wonderful way that nourishes the soul." - Jim Henson, television producer and puppeteer

Excerpts from an interview with Susan Linn by Rachel Barth of the Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood.

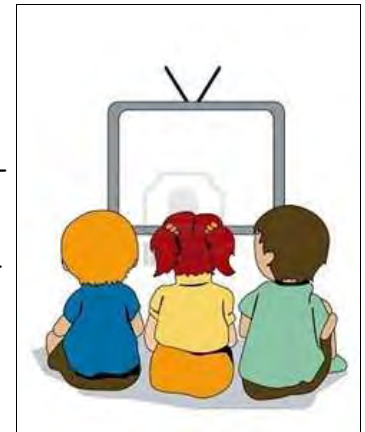
The Campaign for Commercial Free Childhood works through legal means to help parents raise healthy families by limiting commercial access to children. This organization convinced the Walt Disney Company to give refunds on Baby Einstein videos because they were marketing them as educational with no evidence that's the case. They also persuaded Scholastic to stop distributing coal industry PR in 4th grade classrooms disguised as teaching materials and have made a major effort to stop state legislation around the country aimed at placing advertising on school buses.



The exploitation of children for profit is troubling. Today we're seeing an unprecedented convergence of unregulated marketing that targets children with ubiquitous, miniaturized screen media. We've gone from TV and home computers to hand held devices, tablets, and cell phones, which allow marketers just about 24 hour access to children. Commercialism is a factor in so many problems facing children today, including childhood obesity, eating disorders, family stress, materialistic values, irresponsible sexuality, youth violence, and the erosion of children's creative play. All of these issues are concerning, but the impact of screen media

and commercialism on play may be the most troubling; play is the foundation of learning, creativity, constructive problem solving, self-regulation and the capacity to wrestle with life to make it meaningful.

A recent study shows that 50% of babies under the age of one are regular viewers of television—for an average of about 2 hours a day. Data vary on the amount of time preschool children spend with screen media, but even the most conservative findings show that children between the ages of two and five average 2.2 hours per day. Other studies show that preschoolers spend as much as 4.1 to 4.6 hours per day consuming screens. Aside from the fact that screens are the primary vehicle for marketers to target children, excessive screen time is linked to childhood obesity, sleep disturbances, poor school performance and poor social play. Also, it takes young children away from the two activities known to be beneficial for them—hands on creative play and interacting with caring adults.



Linn recommends that teachers and families familiarize themselves with how the marketing and media industries target children. They can insure that their centers are an alternative to the media saturated, marketing driven culture children encounter every day. They should ensure that most of children's time is spent in active and/or creative play, while engaging with each other and caring adults and provide the time, space, silence and inspiration for child-driven active and creative play.



Susan Linn, EdD is a psychologist, instructor in psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and a research associate at Boston Children's Hospital. She is the author of two books, [Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood](#) and [The Case for Make Believe: Saving Play in a Commercialized World](#).

NOTE from the Director: Baby Gator limits the use of screen time to educational activities only. The emphasis in all BG classrooms is the development of thinking, reasoning, communication, and social interactions skills.



MAKE THE RIGHT
CALL...

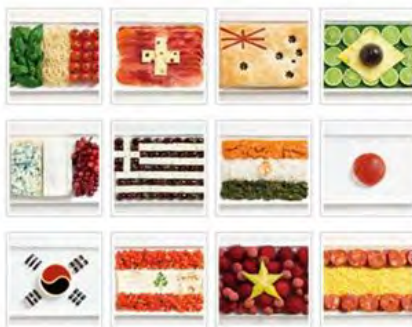
JOIN US FOR THE BABY GATOR
Family Field Day

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH

9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
AT FLAVET FIELD

COME OUT FOR A MORNING OF FUN FILLED
ACTIVITIES AND GAMES!

Save the Date for our
Multicultural Potluck



At Lake Alice:

Wednesday, July 25th 2012

6:00p.m. - 7:00p.m.

Outside in the parking lot at Lake Alice

A sign-up sheet will posted in your child's
classroom the first week of July. 😊

At Newell Drive:

Friday, July 27th 2012

11:30a.m. - 1:00p.m.

Outside in the playground at Newell Drive

A sign-up sheet will posted in your child's
classroom the first week of July. 😊



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and Research Center
at the University of Florida**

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Phone: 352-273-8000
Fax: 352-273-8747

E-mail: carolflowers@ufl.edu
We're on the web at www.babygator.ufl.edu



Congratulations to Us!

Baby Gator at Newell Drive has been awarded accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC accreditation signifies that Baby Gator offers a high quality program that provides a safe and nurturing environment while promoting the development of young children. The year-long accreditation process required teachers and administrative staff to provide evidence that we were meeting over 400 criteria in NAEYC's ten Early Childhood Program Standards. These Standards are based on the latest research in the education and development of young children. We were required to meet at least 80% of the criteria in each of the Program Standards. We met 100% of the criteria in six of the ten Program Standards and 86%-96% in the other four.

The NAEYC accreditation evaluation

committee issued commendations for "promoting positive relationships among all children and adults and encouraging each child's sense of individual worth"; "using on-going, systematic, formal and informal, assessment approaches to provide information on children's learning and development"; "promoting nutrition and health"; "recognizing the importance of reciprocal relationships between families and programs"; "establishing and maintaining reciprocal relationships with agencies and institutions that support our goals for curriculum, health, transitions, inclusion and diversity"; and "administering the program efficiently and effectively". The evaluators also noted that Baby Gator teachers use multiple instructional approaches to optimize children's learning, classrooms are well-organized, well-equipped environments that fos-

ter comfort, health and safety, and Baby Gator teachers and student assistants meet NAEYC criteria for educational qualifications and pursue additional training to ensure continued professional development.

Accreditation is awarded for five years. During that period annual reports must be submitted to document compliance with the Program Standards. The center is also subject to unannounced visits by assessors.

Baby Gator at Lake Alice has been accredited continuously since 1992. The teachers and staff at both centers are to be commended for their hard work and dedication to making Baby Gator centers exemplary early childhood environments.

If you would like to learn more about NAEYC visit www.naeyc.org.