

Baby Gator Tales

Volume 1, Issue 2
October 2010

Dr. Pamela Pallas, Director



Director's Message

Our new school year is off to a great start and we are so pleased to welcome many new students and their families to Baby Gator. We hope your children are enjoying their new classrooms and getting to know their teachers and new friends. Please know that we are here to support you and help your children develop a love of learning through play and fun experiences.

Baby Gator children had two unique visitors in September. I brought Coriander and Pepper, my pet goats, to both Baby Gator Centers. The goats were very gentle and loved all the attention from the children, who petted and fed them.

Contents

Director's Message	1
Lesson Plan Themes	1
Village Drive Center	2
Food For Thought	4
Newell Drive Center	5
PHIT Kids	6
New Students	7
New Teachers/Staff	7-9



Baby Gator has received a grant from the Florida Organic Gardener's Association. The organization created raised vegetable and herb beds outside of the kitchen area at Village Drive. Please stop by and take a look. All the children will be participating in helping the garden stay healthy and fruitful. Our hope is that everything that is produced from this garden will be incorporated into the daily preparation of meals by Chef Steve.

Lesson Plan Themes

October

Falling into Harvest Time:
Celebrating All Things Fall



November

Come Fly With Me:
Exploring Aviation
&
We Give Thanks:
Celebrating Things and
People We are Thankful For



December

The Merry Month of Music:
Exploring all Aspects of
Music



School Pictures - Village Drive & Newell Drive Centers

School Pictures are scheduled for October 5th & 6th at Village Drive and October 7th & 8th at Newell Drive. Feel free to dress your child up or go casual - your child's outfit should express his/her personality. One suggestion - bright colors are recommended as a white background will be used to focus attention on your child. Proofs should be ready for you to pick up at your child's center by October 14th.



Tiny Gator / Little Gator Activities - Village Drive Center

Tiny Gators - So much is happening here with our little ones. During these summer months the babies have enjoyed water days with sponge play, floating animals, and splish-splashing their hands in our mini pool! With this age group, we enjoy new happenings almost weekly. Rolling over, sitting up and trying new foods, are just a few of the exciting things that happen here.

We recently had a "Dessert Potluck" with our parents. The favorite dessert was a Key Lime Pie made by Alex's parents. If you couldn't make it this time, hopefully our next party will fit into your schedule.

We will miss Omri and Rania who have moved on to the Caterpillar classroom. We are looking forward to welcoming two new friends to Tiny Gators!



A warm welcome from Little Gators Caterpillars. The past few months have been very exciting with many activities taking place. During the month of June we explored water. Our children especially enjoyed our fun filled water days and our inside picnic. The month of July we took a passport around the world. We were able to

explore many different countries - America, Italy, China, Brazil, and Africa. August was filled with learning about all different types of animals - circus animals, underwater animals, farm animals, and pets around the house. The children especially enjoyed playing with our homemade squid.

We were sad to see several of our children leave us, but at the same time we are very happy to have gained some new friends. Welcome Jason, Sindi, Desmond, Remy, Matilda, Rania, and Omri to the Caterpillars classroom. We are taking the month of September to get to know our new friends.

In the Butterfly classroom, the children learned about people from around the world. They explored Asia, Africa, South America and other countries. The children have also learned about the different animals that live in these countries. In addition, Butterfly children are learning about "How I am Different/ How I am the Same".

Little Gators Grasshoppers - had fun during the month of September talking about and exploring the themes "All About Me", "I'm Unique", "My family", and "My Friends". We also had a visit from some friendly goats. That was exciting! The Grasshoppers are learning about eating healthy and exercising through PHIT Kids. WOW! We are pumped and ready to go. We love to get physical!

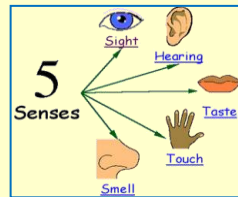


Growing Gators / Future Gators Activities - Village Drive Center

Page 2 of 6



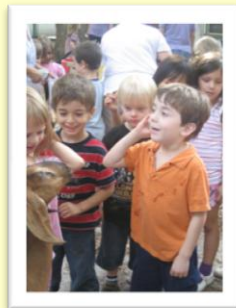
The Growing Gators had a great summer with Friday water days giving us a weekly break from the Florida heat. We took field trips to Lake Alice, the Stadium, and to Corey Village. September was back to school month for many children and our theme was "All About Me and My Family". In October we'll be studying falling leaves, harvest time, and fall foods with a field trip to Publix on October 18th and our Fall Festival on October 22nd. We can't wait! Cookies and hats and pencils - Oh My!



Upcoming Events/Closings at Village Drive

- ◆ CLOSED for Homecoming, Friday October 15th
- ◆ CLOSED for Veteran's Day, Thursday November 11th
- ◆ THANKSGIVING FEAST November 19th
- ◆ CLOSED for Thanksgiving, Thursday & Friday, November 25-26
- ◆ CLOSED for Winter Holidays December 24-31
- ◆ Re-open Monday January 3, 2011

In August the Future Gators Class began a new VPK school year and welcomed many new students. The first weeks of September were fun and busy as we learned about parts of the human body and their functions, the 5 senses, about the city of Gainesville, families, friends and pets. The month of October will bring more new experiences as we talk about school and teachers, the Florida Gators, fall, and enjoy preparing for our annual Fall Festival at the end of the month.



The Future Gators teachers thank all of our families for helping to make the start of this school year smooth and enjoyable for everyone. We would also like to remind all families to sign in and out each day - sign with your full name, and be sure to arrive at Future Gators by 9:15 to ensure your child is here for the start of the VPK day.



Please feel free to speak with any Future Gator teacher if you have questions or concerns. We are enjoying getting to know you, your child, and your family.

Food For Thought by Steve Covolo



My life dream was to become either a chef or a veterinarian. So when it came time to finally decide, chef it was. I did my research and settled on a private culinary college in Chicago called Kendall College. I worked full time and then at night went to culinary college, some nights not getting home until midnight then returning to work by 5AM. It made for one very tired but happy chef-to-be!

My culinary food perspective is to respect the ingredients. This allows them to make the sum of all their parts. Being trained classically French means cooking with butter, heavy cream, and fats. I've since taught myself to cook with less of these elements, which allows the ingredients to shine through. I plan on keeping to my food cooking perspective when cooking for our Baby Gator family. In this process I hope to train the palette of the children. I'm going to be challenging myself to create fun and creative food that involves textures and a color palette. We eat with our eyes first and foremost. This all translates to *fresh* with fewer accents on prepared and processed.

I'm so happy to be part of the Baby Gator organization and look forward to providing healthy and palette-awaking food for your children.

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 holiday gifts!



In September families from both Baby Gator centers participated in a food drive to benefit "Bread of the Mighty", a local food pantry. Children helped decorate donation boxes and sort food items. Thank you for your generosity and for giving Baby Gator children an opportunity to learn from your example.



Thanksgiving Feast At both Baby Gator Centers

Village Drive and Newell Drive families ...

Please join us for our annual Baby Gator Thanksgiving Feast on **Friday, November 19th** at each center. A traditional Thanksgiving meal will be served in each classroom according to their posted lunch schedule.

Please RSVP by filling out a form (available in the office) and returning it to the office by Friday, November 12th with your check. (We must ask you to abide by this firm deadline so we may order sufficient food to feed the children and guests.)

At Village Drive, Chef Steve will be preparing the meal and the cost is \$6.00 per adult and \$3.00 per guest child - OR you may purchase a Gobbler Package for \$20 which includes 2 adult tickets and a Baby Gator International Cookbook!

At Newell Drive, Shands will be catering the event and the cost is \$10.00 per adult and \$3.00 per guest child - OR you may purchase a Gobbler Package for \$25 which includes 2 adult tickets and a Baby Gator International Cookbook!

We hope you'll be able to join us!

CHECKS ONLY, please ... made payable to University of Florida.



Tiny Gators / Little Gators Activities - Newell Drive Center

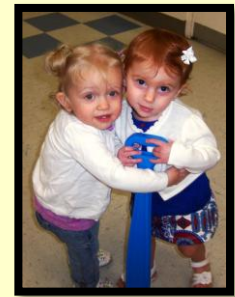
Tiny Gators have been very busy exploring new activities. Water day wrapped up in September and children learned "All About Me" by exploring themselves, their friends and teachers with finger paint! They used sensory jars filled with sea glass and noodles, and played with ice cubes with different colors. Tiny Gators have also been enjoying outside time exploring everything that is around us in nature.



In the Little Gators 1 Seahorse and Starfish classrooms we have been enjoying getting to know all of our new friends. We have been singing the class favorite song, "Baby Bumble Bee" and have been working on eating off of big-kid plates and scooping with our spoons. We would like to welcome Miss Tracy to the class.



In the Little Gators 2 classrooms - Otters, Beavers, and Manatees - children have learned all about themselves, friends, favorites, and colors. We also learned about differences and enjoyed fun family activities as well as Favorite Thing Day and Teacher's Favorite Snack Day. In October we will be learning all about Harvests - fall crops, scarecrows, and the season of Autumn.



Growing Gators Activities - Newell Drive Center

Upcoming Events/Closings at Newell Drive

- ◆ CLOSED for Thanksgiving, Thursday & Friday, November 25-26
- ◆ CLOSED Christmas Eve, Friday December 24th
- ◆ CLOSED New Year's Eve, Friday December 31st

In Growing Gators during September we learned "All About Me". We went on a field trip to the O'Connell Center and the Stadium. We also had a week devoted to pets. All teachers brought in their pets from home and Ms Pam brought in her goats for us to enjoy and play with. In October we are going to have a Fall Festival with carnival fun and costumes.



PHITkids

Physical Healthy Interactive Training



Developing healthy living habits early in a child's life provides them with a strong foundation for a healthy life in their future. The goal of the PHIT Kids program is to do just that. Through nutrition education, physical education, motor development, and health and safety education our children will learn how to keep their bodies healthy and well. All of the children at Baby Gator get scheduled PHIT Kids time each week. For our infants and toddlers we will work on various motor development skills, recognition of healthy foods and images, and exposure to new physical activities. Our older gators will have a health education component and a physical education component each week where we will learn how to be healthy and fit.



This fall semester will be entirely devoted to the MyPyramid for kids. We will spend a couple weeks exploring each of the six sections of the pyramid:

- Grains - Make half your grains whole
- Vegetables - Vary your veggies
- Fruits - Focus on Fruits
- Oils - Know your limits
- Milk - Get your calcium-rich foods
- Meat & Beans - Go lean with protein

Follow the link to explore the MyPyramid for kids and gain access to a host of information: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers/index.html>

Our children are active every day and whether they realize it or not they are getting exercise. PHIT Kids will help them learn that exercise is fun and can be done in many different ways. Each month we will engage in a different type of physical activity. September was devoted to movement and stretching. Activities included yoga, obstacle courses, dancing, and shaking.

October will be all about balls! We will roll, kick, throw, and bounce all different types of balls. In November we will be jumping and bouncing around on hoppers, with parachutes, and more play with balls. We will wrap up year with some bean bag activities for December.



New Students

Please welcome our newest students at Village Drive ---

Tiny Gators: **Titus and Rahul**

Little Gators Caterpillars: **Remy, Matilda, and Jason**

Little Gators Butterflies: **Henry, Brendan, Andrew, Alex, Aidan, and Yuna**

Little Gators Grasshoppers: **Amber, Caleb, Gavin, Samuel**

Growing Gators: **Tinkie, Jennifer, Deborah, Kevin, Jack, Gabriela, Gabriel, Reese, Runfei**

Future Gators: **Daniel, Warren, Junyoung, Erin, Layla, Nicholas, Junsang, Soogyem, Gideon, Kennedy, Braydn, and David**



Please welcome our newest students at Newell Drive ---

Tiny Gators: **Karsten, Cade, Sofia, Aiden, Sebastian**

Little Gators 1: **Cassandra, Ikshaan, Oliva, Miles, Samantha**

Little Gators 2: **London, Sanjana**

Growing Gators: **Katie**



New Teachers

Amanda Palmiotto - Growing Gator's classroom at Village Drive



Amanda joined Baby Gator in August of 2010 as a full time teacher. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from the University of Florida.

As a UF student, she worked as a substitute teacher at Baby Gator in all of the classrooms for 4 years. Besides working at Baby Gator, Amanda has assisted in vacation bible school with her church, worked with developmentally disabled children and has been a nanny. Amanda values the importance of language and communication and as a result has started learning Spanish and frequently uses sign language in the classroom. Outside of Baby Gator Amanda enjoys spending time with family and friends, watching movies, cleaning and making every opportunity an opportunity for learning. Amanda would like to further her education by obtaining a Master's degree in the area of Child Psychology.

Dorothy Murray - Future Gator's classroom at Village Drive



Dorothy joined Baby Gator in July of 2010. Dorothy comes to Baby Gator with over 15 years experience caring for and teaching young children.

She has a Bachelor's degree in Sociology with a minor in Early Childhood Education from Herbert Lehman College, and also has a diploma in Infant/Toddler care from the Center for Montessori Education College of New Rochelle. Dorothy enjoys organizing and creating fun activities for the children in her care to explore. In her spare time Dorothy's hobbies include reading, checking out antique and historical objects and going on nature walks.



New Teachers

Amber McMillian - LG1 Starfish classroom at Newell Drive



Amber joined Baby Gator in July of 2010. She has her Associates degree in Elementary Education from Santa Fe College. Amber has over 4 years of teaching experience

in a childcare setting. She also volunteers with the children's program in her church. Amber hopes to bring her love of singing and dancing into her classroom as well as her knowledge of sign language. In her spare time Amber enjoys singing, dancing and reading.

Tracie Faulkner - LG1 Starfish classroom at Newell Drive



Tracie joined Baby Gator in September of 2010. She earned her Associates of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Santa Fe College.

While pursuing her degree she gained experience working with children throughout Alachua County elementary schools as well as working as a camp counselor. Tracie enjoys bringing her love of music and art into the classroom. In her spare time she enjoys arts and crafts, listening to and playing music, singing, and spending time with her sisters.

Alexandra Avelino - LG2 Otters classroom at Newell Drive



Alex joined Baby Gator in September of 2010 with over two years experience working with young children. She has her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Florida.

She also was a research assistant where she assessed and treated children with challenging behaviors and adults with developmental disabilities. Alex's goals in the classroom are to provide tools and techniques so children can understand and better control their emotions and to help them develop growing self confidence and self-esteem. In her spare time she enjoys reading, listening to music, baking and spending time outdoors.

Rayne Marency - LG2 Manatees classroom at Newell Drive



Rayne joined Baby Gator in September of 2010 with over 10 years of experience working with young children.

She has her Associate of Science degree in Early Childhood Education and an Associate of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Santa Fe College. Rayne got her love of seafood and nature by growing up on the coast of Maine. She enjoys being with friends and family on the lake, attending Gator sporting events and going out to eat. Rayne loves photography, music and travel.

Ethel Rocha - TG Hummingbirds classroom at Newell Drive



Ethel joined Baby Gator in September of 2010. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and has over 10 years of experience working in a preschool/ kindergarten setting. Ethel loves to paint and sing with the children, she also incorporates Spanish into classroom activities. Outside of work she enjoys spending time with her husband and daughter, reading and watching movies.

New Staff

Steve Covolo - Chef at Village Drive



Steve joined Baby Gator in July of 2010. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Baby Gator that will improve and enhance our food program.

Steve has his Culinary Certificate from Kendall College in Chicago and before coming to Baby Gator he worked as an Executive Chef at a local restaurant for two years. Steve's expertise as a chef enables him to use his passion for food to produce quality meals with healthy ingredients, without sacrificing taste. His food mantra would be "Respect the Ingredients", for in doing so, your food will always taste better.



Tina Mazza - Office Manager at Newell Drive



Tina Mazza joined the Baby Gator administrative staff in April, 2010. She holds an Associate's degree in Child Care Management from Central Pennsylvania Business School and has been working in child care settings

for the past 22 years. At Reading Hospital Child Development Center she was a teacher and then the office manager. Tina enjoys the beach and just spending time outside, crocheting and sewing.

Denise Hofman - Assistant Director for Administration at Newell Drive



Denise joined Baby Gator in September of 2010. She has a Bachelors degree in Healthcare Administration, a Master's degree in Business Administration and a Master's degree in Elementary Education.

Denise has over 20 years of education experience in the U.S. Navy, 2 years teaching English to Japanese school children and 1 year as a substitute teacher with Alachua County schools. In her spare time she loves kayaking, camping, working outdoors in her yard and watching football.



Baby Gator Child
Development and Research
Center
University of Florida

293 Village Drive
Gainesville, FL 32611

Phone:
(352) 392-2330

Fax:
(352) 846-0503

1600 SW Archer Road
HD-G60-D
P.O. Box 100018
Gainesville, FL 32610

Phone:
(352) 273-8000

Fax:
(352) 273-8747



Go Gators!

Ebony Haynes - Secretary at Newell Drive



Ebony joined Baby Gator in September of 2010. She has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science with a minor in Music Education from Florida A&M University. Ebony has over 10 years experience volunteering with her church youth groups and as a teacher's aide. In her spare time she enjoys family cookouts, playing the piano and singing.



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

Email address for Newsletter information:
carolflowers@ufl.edu