



Caterpillar News

June Review 2015

Dear Parents,

June is over, and that means the school year is almost over. Crazy! Every year, it seems as if the time between Easter and summer vacation is over in just the blink of an eye! Think back to when your child started at Little Daisies. Many of them couldn't walk. Most of them could only say a word or two. Their entire world consisted of Mom and Dad. Now look at them! They talk in sentences. Not only do they walk, but they run, hop and jump. Their world has expanded to include 11 'siblings' and 8 new caregivers!

Every day, our Caterpillars continue to blossom. You should see them when we tell them it is time to go over to the Butterflies every afternoon, or on Fridays when we use the Butterfly half of the center for the Open Concept. They are so eager! They have grown up, and are ready for the next thing. Caterpillars is great, but the Butterflies has corners where you can get away, they have a couch where you can 'chill' while you read, they have real matchbox cars, their loft is more challenging to get in and out of. Our little Caterpillars have outgrown our safe, cozy classroom.

Naturally, we don't let them stagnate and be bored during their last months with us. We are constantly offering new and exciting options for them. We build harder and more challenging opportunities in the Turnzimmer. We bring out more challenging fine motor items, such as beads and string. We offer them harder puzzles, and even two piece jigsaws. We got out the Brio train set, and will bring some matchbox cars over in July. We vary the dress up clothes, and have added boots and slippers to our dress up collection, as the children reach the stage where they really enjoy imaginative play. We offer Potty Parties more often, and are actually having some success, as a few different children sometimes do manage to pee or poo in the pot. When this happens, we look at it and discuss it, and celebrate!

The Caterpillars have also been having the chance to be the older ones in the center. Tina's four June Eingewöhnung children are all in and settled, and she invites some children to spend time in Caterpillars with them in the afternoons if they would like. Some of the Caterpillars are so fascinated by these 'little babies'. They will squat down and observe them, as if they were creatures in a zoo. Some will even pet them, stroking their hair for as long as the child will allow. The 2014/15 Caterpillars are our little ones no longer!

What have we been up to?

Nature and Environment:

- One afternoon, at the beginning of the month, when it was really warm, we offered a water activity in the garden. We filled two shallow tubs with water and left them in the sun to warm a bit. Our thought was that the children would dip their hands in the water and use their shovels and buckets in the water. Ha, ha, were we underestimating them! They were jumping in the water and plopping onto their butts with big splashes

and calls of “plumps!” There was quite a bit more cleanups afterwards than we had expected, since most children needed a complete change of clothes. But it was GREAT! That is what summer is all about!

- We had so much rain this month, that whether we planned for it or not, the children found puddles everywhere. Johanneskirchespielplatz has a number of spots that collect water really well, and playground trips on Tuesdays were great fun for the children, as puddles in dirt mean ‘lots of FUN!’ Talk about Matsch!
- The flowers on the bushes have been of great interest to the children lately. A couple of days ago, a few children discovered that if they pulled hard enough, they could pull large stalks off of the bushes growing beside the back fence of the garden, and they were so proud carrying around their big stalks! Some of the stalks were taller than the children! And naturally, once the other children saw what the first had discovered, they had to go over to get their own stalk 😊.
- We have been spending more and more time barefoot lately. We offer the children the option of wearing their house shoes or being barefoot inside. And, when it is warm enough, they may also choose to wear their shoes or go barefoot outside. It takes some getting used to all the sensations when you are barefoot, but most of the children are really enjoying the freedom of no shoes!

Movement and Sport:

- The children are starting to use the large soft blocks we have in the Tunrzimmer to build their own paths, or items. For example, they may put the triangle one against the Podest to use as a ramp. Or they will line up 3 to 5 of the pieces and then use them as a trail to walk across. Some of the children even put them together in imaginative play and use them as a train or bus!
- Some of the children have mastered jumping from the Podesten. They will stand up there and swing their arms and count and then jump off. Those who can’t do it yet will not be outdone, though. They stand on the edge of the Podest and swing their arms and count, and then step off, or sit down and then step off, totally proud that they can ‘jump’ off as well 😊.
- Mary does a game with the children where she recites “Ring Around the Rosie” for the children, and at the end, the last line is “They all fall down”, which she says with a wonderful excitement and emphasis. The children just LOVE it, and will fall down laughing and begging for another round.

Circle Time & Language:

- Wow, we have been hearing more children using “please” and “thank you” lately! At meal times, instead of just demanding water or more, we often hear “mehr, bitte”. Or when we give a child their toothbrush in the bathroom, they may respond “danke”.
- We mentioned last month that we are working with the children to use their words instead of shouting or hitting when they don’t like something another child is doing, and a few of them are starting to manage this. We will hear “I don’t like that” or “No!” or “Stop!”. Yay!!!!
- I think the children could now lead circle on their own, if we were to task them with it. When we announce it is time for morning circle, they will run to get the sitting crabs out and put them on the floor by themselves. They often play circle on their own throughout the day, and we have heard that some of them even play it at home, and expect the parents and the siblings to participate. One day, when it was not circle time, one of the Caterpillars decided it was time for a group circle, so she got out a number of crabs and set them in a ‘circle’ and we joined her (whomever wanted to, which was actually most of the children) and had a second morning circle.

- The children can speak well enough now that they are able to spread rumors. Leonas' mama has a baby in her belly, and this is a hot topic right now in the Caterpillars, and we have had a couple of other children tell us that their mama also has a baby in their belly! Their next sentence is that Mama has chocolate in her belly, so we are left wondering... ☺. So far, though, there are no confirmed other pregnancies in amongst the Caterpillar mamas.

Music:

- Nici has a wonderful new song with she sings with the children using the wooden tapping sticks, called "Wer will fleißiges Handwerker sein?" The song goes through a number of jobs and with each one, there is an action to fulfill. For example, the baker stirs his dough; the cobbler sews shoes, etc. The children really enjoy the variety and do a great job in participating in the actions.
- The song about rain, "Es regnet, es regnet, es regnet so sehr" has been getting way too much playtime this month due to all the rain, but it is a great song and very much loved.
- As you probably already know, the children LOVE the Happy Birthday song. They will often sing it randomly throughout the day, and it is always interesting to see who they are celebrating this time. Sometimes it is themselves, other times it is Mama or Opa. Nici introduced a new version to them last week: "Happy Birthday to you. Apricose im Schuh. Marmelade in der Hose. Happy Birthday to you!"

Arts and Crafts:

- On one of the very few warm days this month, we gave each child a paintbrush in the garden, and they could dip it in a bucket of water (which we held, so that it would last ☺), and they got to paint the garden! They painted the fence, the walls, the doors, the slide, etc. It is a simple activity that the children loved, and kept them entertained for a VERY long time!
- We have been practicing with scissors, which the children love! One day the children were able to use their scissors to cut (or rip) pieces of white paper that they then glued onto a larger piece of construction paper.
- We finger-painted onto corrugated cardboard. Introducing new textures and mediums are important to the children's knowledge of the world and their senses.
- The children got to dip cups in paint, and then make circle prints on their paper. Glitter rounded out the activity.
- Face painting has actually become the main goal whenever we offer the children paints anymore. After painting for a bit on whatever material we have provided, they then move on to applying the face to their face and hair! Fun!!!!

Math and Science

- An extremely popular activity this month was the repeat (we did this a couple of months ago) was the Forschen activity "What sinks and what swims". It was so much fun, it turned into a major water play session, with most children needing a complete change of clothing afterwards.
- Counting continues to get better and better in the Caterpillars. We hear some of the children reciting the numbers all the way up to 10, either in one language, or using a mixture of both. It is fun asking the children to count something, such as wheels on a car. They have the idea, but haven't quite mastered the fine details yet. They will start counting and will continue on a few past the 'right' number. Wheels on a car? "One, two, three, four, five, six!"

- Wow, it is super hard to only hold up two fingers to show how old you are! One is easy, but when you need to add that second one, most of the others pop up as well. So the child might proudly show you how old they are, saying “two”, with 4 or 5 fingers sticking up 😊.

• **Thank you so much for taking the time this month to sit down with us for your child’s Entwicklungsgespräch. We had a great time preparing for them, and appreciate that you took the time to prepare by filling out your “My Child is Amazing” form. Each team member actually filled out one of those forms for each child, as well, and it was a lot of fun to see the different things that each team member notices about each child. That’s what makes working as a team so wonderful. We each have a slightly different relationship with each child, and by putting them all together we are able to get more of a whole pictures.**

• **We hope that you will be able to make it to our final Elternabend for the year, on Thursday, July 2. We plan to give you some tips regarding Potty Training, and also have a fun game planned for you.**

• **And don’t forget about the Summer Party on July 16, beginning at 15:30.**

**Your Caterpillar Team,
Tina, Ai, and Judith and Mary**