



Caterpillar News

March Review 2015

Dear Parents,

Hasn't the weather been lovely? Don't forget that even if it is only 3°C when you bring the children in the morning, by afternoon it may be 17+ degrees, and the sun bakes our courtyard, so even if it is breezy and cool on Einsteinstrasse or Seeriderstrasse, when we are out in the yard at 15:30, it is often REALLY warm, so we won't need the Strumpfhose, long sleeve sweaters, and winter hats then. What we DO NEED are socks that we can swap the Strumpfhose for after nap, short sleeve t-shirts or bodies that we can swap the long sleeve sweaters for, thin raincoats and think Matschhosen, as well as sun hats to protect the children's heads and eyes. Remember, we do not take any child out in the sun without a sunhat.

March has been a fun month to get ready for Easter. Have you seen our lovely Easter baskets that currently hang from the ceiling? We'll pull them down and fill them for our Easter party. We have also started working on our Easter eggs. Not so easy! First we have to manage to hard-boil enough eggs without breaking the shells in the process. Then, we try to place the egg on a play dough base so the children can paint them (we just use normal paints and paintbrushes). But they tip off quite easily, so getting them painted without having them fall and crack is as hard as it sounds. And then you have the skeptics: "You want me to do what with that egg? Paint it? What in the world for?" Seriously, if you could only see the faces of some of the children when we set out to do this activity, you would swear this is what they were thinking.

We are so thankful to have found Mary to join our team in place of Gisela. She is settling in well, though after a week and a half, she had already caught the flu from working in such close contact with so many little children for the first time. Here's wishing her a long, happy, and healthy time at Little Daisies.

This month, as you read about what we have been up to, you will see that the children are into and gathering and collecting right now. We suggest that you help support them in this by making containers and bags available for them at home. Do you have some old purses you could pull out for them? How about some smaller, child-sized shopping bags? Something they can either carry in their hand, or even put over their shoulder. Tupperware containers that they could play with, with or without lids are also great. Or maybe even shoe boxes. Any containers with lids that they could put many items in and then close and carry around would be super to make available. Read on to see why...

What have we been up to?

Nature and Environment:

- At the playground, some of the children noticed that the bushes were starting to bud. Ai went over to see what they were looking at, and talked to them about what they

were seeing. Then a few more went over to find out what was going on. A couple of them declared the new leaves to be ‘babies’, and then they continued to look for more new growth.

- In the garden, whether playing in the sand or in the grass, the children will now and then find a stone or pebble. They are always so delighted to find these, and will show them off to each of us adults. “Stone, look, stone.” “Stein!” Don’t ask why, but when you are one, going on two, finding a stone is an amazing and wonderful thing!

Movement and Sport:

- At the playground, most of the children are now able to climb all the way up and use the big slide. This came about quite suddenly, as it seems only a few short weeks ago that only a very few were able to manage getting all the way up!
- As you know, we are Open on Wednesday and Friday mornings. The children just love to play in the Butterflies! The Butterfly loft is higher and more challenging to access than the Caterpillar one. The Caterpillar children have been observing how the older children get up and down from them. Now, some of the Caterpillars have been climbing up into the Butterfly loft themselves. This is a perfect example of the benefit of being Open: the younger children can learn from the older children.
- Sometimes we bring our Little Tykes slide or the Hupfperde out of the office for the children to use in the Turnzimmer. Now, whenever we open the door between the Turnzimmer and the office, the children get all excited and stand there with big expectations. Sometimes, we are only going to get the poles to open and close the sunshades outside on Seeriederstrasse, but usually their expectations are fulfilled, as we’ll pull out something they don’t get to play with very often.

Circle Time & Language:

- The children are singing sooooo much right now. Everywhere you turn, someone is singing something to himself or herself. My instinct is always to join in and sing with them, but I have learned that they don’t necessarily want that. If you join in and sing with your child, and they immediately stop singing and just look at you, it might be an indication that they don’t want to sing together, they were happy just singing to themselves.
- “Potty Party” is a big word right now. Whoever does the morning round of diapering will offer the children the chance to participate in a potty party, and a number of the children will walk around saying “potty party, potty party,” and after coming out of the bathroom will report that they participated in a “potty party” and maybe tell us that they made “pee pee” (not always true, but they know what the goal is and like to talk about having achieved that goal). We have put out a couple of potties for the children to use in the classroom for play, and they are also a huge hit. There will often be a child fully clothed sitting on one and reading their book, or whatever. We will ask, “Oh, are you making a pee-pee?” Big grins and nods are the answer we get.
- Before mealtimes, to keep the children entertained and happy while they are waiting patiently for everyone to get their bibs on, we have started singing a new song called “One Little Finger”:
One little finger, one little finger, one little finger, tap, tap, tap
Point to the ceiling, point to the floor, put it on your.....

As we sing “put it on your.....” and then wait to see where the children want to put it, they shout out suggestions. “Nose” is very popular, as is “eyes”. Whenever we say “butt” they all laugh and point to their butts. They know the important body parts!

- When Ai does circle time with the children in the morning, she likes to ask them what day it is. Even though the children don't really get the concept, they will often answer by saying "Freitag!" We think that is because when it is Friday, we say it with such enthusiasm!

Music:

- Nici has been singing "Hände waschen" with the children. It is a lovely song about washing your body parts (hands, hair, belly, etc.), where we go through the motions as if we were really washing. Then, once the body part is all clean, we realize we don't have a towel, so we have to shake the body part dry. Lots of giggles are always present during this song!
- An Easter song that Nici has been singing is "10 kleine Osterhasen". She has 10 cut out bunny rabbits which she lays in two rows, and one by one they disappear as they fall asleep, or get sick, or go off to work, or whatever. Pretty cute.

Arts and crafts:

- Gluing and sticking continues to be a huge hit. We gave the children colorful stickers to apply to black paper early in the month, and it was too bad we ran out of stickers, because the children would have kept doing it for much longer. Some of the children caught on immediately that only one side of the sticker would stick to the paper. Others, no matter how many times we would show them, would try to stick the non-sticky side of the sticker to the paper over and over. Some got frustrated trying to get the sticker to stop sticking to their fingers, and were done with the activity quite quickly. A few even learned how to take the plastic paper off the back of the sticker on their own, in order to stick their stickers. Talk about fine motor skill! Then you always have the ones who don't like to leave the sticker stuck, but will pull it off and re-stick it over and over and over. No problem, it is all about the experience.
- One day, we did a group painting activity, in that we put a large piece of paper at each table, and all the children sitting at each table created a masterpiece together, using paints and brushes. You will see lots of photos of this activity in our March pictures on the web. Moni took one of these 'works of art' home for her wall!
- We also did a similar activity with crayons, in that we taped a really long piece of paper onto the floor of the Turnzimmer and the children sat or lay on their bellies to color on it. Wow, every inch of the paper got covered.
- The children finger-painted on the table (this activity will never get old for them), and then we made prints of their work using egg shaped paper. They also go to paint directly onto egg shaped paper on another occasion, as we needed more eggs for a display. 😊

Math and Science

- Weights and measures are really important to the children right now. How many toys can I stuff into the suitcase and still get it closed? If I put the three dolls in the suitcase, why won't it close? How heavy will the suitcase be if I put every book we have in there? The suitcases are no longer interesting to just carry around empty.
- Gathering and collecting is also very important to the children right now. We will often put wooden memory cards or domino pieces or finger puppets out on the floor for the children to play with. For many of the children, it is more important to them that they take as many as possible, that they gather a collection, rather than actually playing with any one, or looking at any individual memory card. It's not about greed and not wanting to share, it is a need to gather. They especially like putting these in their shopping bags and carrying them around.

So now you know why we recommend that you made some bags and Tupperware containers available for your children at home.

We wish you and your family a lovely Easter. Because so many children will be gone around Easter, we will wait to celebrate Easter in the Caterpillars until Thursday, April 9. The teachers will enjoy a special breakfast and Easter egg hunt with the children on that morning.

Your Caterpillar Team,

Tina, Ai, and Judith and Mary