

The Philosophy by Sarah Cooper

As a Reggio Emilia inspired school, our educational approach is rooted in relationships and I have the pleasure of witnessing this in action daily. Two weeks ago Discovery F teachers shared classroom observations revealing that Mondays presented challenges for students and teachers. Teachers were ready to go with rigorous academic experiences and students were eager to reconnect with each other and the Discovery F adults. They reflected on the start of their Mondays and realized they needed to adjust the schedule to support students' social and emotional needs.

Teachers began Monday class meetings, honoring children's desires to reconnect after the weekend and embedded meaningful conversations about how to treat others with kindness. For about a month now, all 40 students in Discovery F meet in one classroom each Monday morning. The teachers lead conversations framed around issues they observe in the classroom and the class motto, "Be the best version of you." The following questions sparked conversations in the initial meetings:

- What kind of an adult would you be without parents, teachers or adults in your lives? How would that feel? What would it be like if you were never corrected?
- How do you feel when you get redirected?
- How do you give feedback to others?
- How do you encourage each other to be the best version of you?
- How do you receive feedback?
- How do you encourage others?

Teachers noted that after morning meetings each Monday, students and teachers were prepared for their time together and were grounded in the Discovery F community. Fifth grader Rikiya believes the meetings "give you motivation to make the world a better place, to be kind."

After hearing about the success of these meetings in Discovery F, I came across a recent publication from Reggio Emilia, Italy that explained class meetings as essential operational structures for teaching and learning. According to *Indications: Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centres of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia* (2010),

"Class meetings are the priority context for constructing the identity and the sense of belonging of a group of children, educators, and parents. The class meetings, by means of diversified strategies, times and methods (for example: individual meetings, group meetings, and assemblies) have the aim to promote sociality, to share educational projects and proposals and to construct exchange and dialogue around the different ideas about children, school and learning. The class meetings are... convened periodically by the classroom teachers over the arc of the year according to the needs and opportunities, which may also be indicated by the parents." (p. 16)

Discovery F teachers are making instructional decisions with student needs in mind and illustrate the benefits of an education based on relationships!

Sarah Cooper, Pedagogista
coopesar@grcdc.org

Grand Rapids Nutrition Center

The full menu is available on our website:
<http://grcdc.org/be-connected/link-letters/>

Breakfast (\$1.50):	Lunch (\$2.75):
Milk only: \$0.50	
T— Mini pancakes	Philly cheesesteak sandwich
W— Turkey bacon boat	Chicken fajita
Th— Waffle stick	Chicken patty
F— Breakfast wrap	Double stuff cheese pizza
M 12/12—Breakfast bites	Minh's orange chicken

Breakfast time: 7:30AM—7:50 AM

Discovery A & B

Lunch 11:55 AM—12:15 PM Recess 12:15—12:40 PM

Discovery C & D

Lunch 10:55 AM—11:15 AM Recess 11:15—11:40 AM

Discovery E & F

Lunch 11:25 AM—11:45 AM Recess 11:45 AM—12:10 PM

Central Office Updates, continued

- **School Pictures** for students who did re-take or make-up photos are being sent home today.
- **School Closings:** In the case of inclement weather, we will make a decision to close school as early as possible. We will send an email blast out to our E-Link list and inform the news agencies (television and radio) if we decide to close. **Look or listen** for our school's name 'Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center' or 'GR Child Discovery Center'. We will also **change the voice mail** to indicate that school is closed for the day. If you have any questions about this policy, please let us know. If you are not receiving email notices, please send an email to Rachel at harthrac@childdiscoverycenter.org to be added to the E-Link list.
- **Winter and Recess:** At GRCDC, we go outside for recess every day, including the winter months. Students should bring snow pants, hats, gloves and boots each day to school during the winter. If your child does not have winter gear, we do have some extra items available in the office. Please note: If the wind chill is at or below zero, the students will stay inside for recess.
- **Winter Break** is shortened this year due to the state mandated increase in the number of school days and another state mandate for schools to follow the common calendar that is set by our area intermediate school district (Kent ISD). Please be aware and plan family trips to coincide with the planned days off from school. This is a reminder for you as we made efforts to get the word out about this as early as June of this year via a letter that was mailed home, in the Link Letter and in the printed school calendar.

Community Corner

Immigration Information

I am an immigration attorney and mom to a GRCDC kindergartener. I work with immigrants and the people who love them on a daily basis. Given the promises President-elect Trump made to take some serious and far-reaching steps on the issue of immigration, people are understandably frightened. In an effort to keep our GRCDC community strong and unafraid, I want to offer to speak with anyone about immigration options they may have, or simply about which of the many immigration related "to do" items Trump promised are possible and/or likely. Knowledge is powerful at times like these. Please feel free to email me at mmoore@avantilaw.com or call my cell phone at (616) 635-7871. Should you wish to support our immigrant communities here in Michigan, I suggest a donation to the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (<http://michiganimmigrant.org/>). Thank you, Meghan Moore.

Please arrange for your child to arrive at school between 7:45 - 8:00 am. Please sign your child in at the office if arrival is after 8:05 am.
 Dismissal is 3:15 pm M, T, Th, F and 1:10 pm on Wednesdays