



*Celebrating 50 years of Care, Curiosity and Community!*

Volume No. 20, Issue No. 6 | March 2025

*The mission of Concord Children's Center is to cultivate an intimate, welcoming community where children develop respectful relationships and inquisitive minds, build confidence in their individual gifts, and are engaged, prepared and inspired to learn*

## News & Updates from CCC

### Springing Forward — What's Happening at CCC

Dear CCC Community,

As I write this, we're experiencing our first truly warm day in quite some time — a “feels like” temperature of 53 degrees that hints at the arrival of spring! It's a welcome reminder that brighter, longer days are just around the corner.

Spring at Concord Children's Center is bursting with exciting events and opportunities! March and April are filled with enriching experiences for our educators, including professional development and wellness activities.

- On **March 14**, CCC will be closed to families while our teaching teams come together to reflect on the year so far and collaborate on the months ahead. But that's just the beginning! Educators will also take part in a hands-on Process Art workshop, and a relaxing and meditative Mandala Painting session, and will continue the work begun in the Loose Parts Professional Learning Community (read more below).
- To expand our learning beyond our own walls, some of our educators will attend the [Lincoln Nursery School Educator's Conference](#) on **March 29** and the [Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children \(MAEYC\) Conference](#) on **April 26**.
- Meanwhile, our Farm to School team is busy planning special events this spring for both educators and families, celebrating growth in all its forms — just like the tiny seeds beginning to sprout this season.



Speaking of seeds, we are thrilled to partner with the [Transcendentalism Council of First Parish](#) as part of the [Concord250](#) celebrations for a special educator panel on **April 2**. Thoreau once said: “*Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders.*” The ideals of the Transcendentalist movement continue to inspire education today, and we invite you to join us that day in the Goodwin Forum at the [Concord Free Public Library](#) to hear from modern-day Concord educators about the wonders unfolding across the educational spectrum.

Looking ahead to May, the excitement continues with Special Friends Day, school picnics, Field Day, and a heartwarming family-friendly celebration on **Sunday, May 18**, honoring **Joanne Saideh** and **Penni Hensley Wagner**'s retirements – more info about this last event below. These events, along with many more, promise to make this spring a season of connection, joy, and lasting memories. We hope you'll join us!

## Celebrating Joanne and Penni

After a combined **83 years** at CCC, long-time staff members **Joanne Saideh** and **Penni Hensley Wagner** will be retiring this summer. We will be honoring them in several ways this spring, including:

- a community celebration on **Sunday, May 18**, from 4-6pm at the Playscape at Ripley that will include live music and food trucks, and
- creating a memory book for each of them.

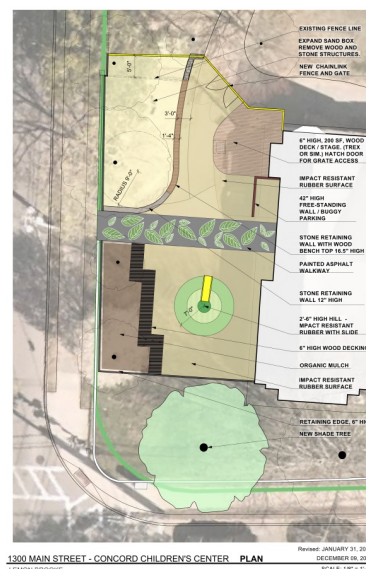
Visit the [CCC website](#) to submit your memories of Penni and Joanne and learn more about how we will be honoring them on their retirement.

## Update: Upgrading our West Concord Infant/Toddler Playground

In our October and December newsletters, we shared the progress of our plans to redesign and renovate our West Concord Infant/Toddler playground, with the goals of:

- redesigning the space to meet the needs of our current 27 infants and toddlers rather than the original 12,
- resurfacing the space to make it appropriate for our youngest students, and
- redesigning the space to invite the imaginative outdoor play that is a critical part of our mission.

As you know, the project was approved by the [Town Historic Districts Commission](#) in December. The project was approved contingent on our filing updated plans and color samples of the rubber surfacing we plan to use. These updated plans and samples have been filed with the Commission, and we are now commencing the search for a general contractor. Our landscape architect, [LemonBrooke](#), is guiding us through the process, and we will share a project timeline once it is available.



*Updated West Concord I/T playground plan filed with the Town Historic Districts Commission*

## Professional Development Activities

As always, our educators have been busy continuing their learning through a variety of professional development opportunities!

### Loose Parts Professional Learning Community

This three-part series builds upon a CCC 2019 professional learning community (PLC) exploring the concept of Loose Parts through the Loose Parts book series: *Loose Parts; Inspiring Play in Young Children*, *Loose Parts 2 Inspiring Play with Infants and Toddlers*, and *Loose Parts 3: Inspiring Culturally Sensitive Environments*. A 4th book, *Loose Parts 4: Inspiring 21st Century Learning*, has been added to the series, so our teachers have been revisiting the topic for one night in each of January, February and March.

Loose parts play can foster creativity, problem-solving skills, and imagination in young children. However, getting started may seem daunting if you're not familiar with the concept. Each participant in the PLC has chosen one of the books to focus on, and the group as a whole is reviewing the theory of loose parts and looking at the benefits of loose parts play and play themes in loose parts play. Participants have been collecting loose parts materials and documenting and sharing experiences.

**Loose parts** is a term coined by British architect Simon Nicholson, who carefully considered landscapes and environments that form connections. Nicholson believed that we are all creative and that "loose parts" in an environment will empower our creativity (Nicholson, 1971).



Many play experts and early childhood educators have adopted the term and theory of loose parts. Loose parts are materials that are moved, carried, redesigned, lined up, taken apart, and put back together in multiple ways. Loose parts are used alone or combined with other materials. They have unlimited play possibilities rather than single outcomes, which means that there is not a specific way to use items. There is no set of specific directions for materials considered loose parts. The child is the direction.

Adults can offer ample space, time, and the invitation to explore interesting materials (loose parts!) to foster a sense of curiosity, critical thinking, and joyful investigation!

## Process Art

On March 11, our educators have the opportunity to learn about process art with **Carrie Becker** of [Transforming Early Childhood Education](#) at her workshop **Enjoy the Process! Artistic Opportunities for Infants-Preschoolers**. Carrie will share the benefits of process art through hands-on, engaging experiences.

## Staff Mandala Painting

The latest in our continued effort to ensure our staff's mental wellness, we will be hosting a staff mandala painting activity the afternoon of our professional day on **Friday, March 14**. Mandala painting is known to be relaxing and meditative, and when done in a group, it can be fun too!

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## Advancement & Community Updates

### 2025-2026 Admissions

Signed 25-26 enrollment agreements and completed summer 2025 applications are both due to CCC Enrollment Coordinator [Emily D'Arcy](#) by the end of the day on **Friday, March 7!**



## Celebrating 50 Years of Concord Children's Center

CCC is celebrating its **50th anniversary** in 2025 -- 50 years of **Care, Curiosity, and Community**. We will be observing this milestone with events, social media flashbacks, and more! For the most current information, visit the [50th anniversary page](#) on the CCC website and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). And save **Saturday, October 18, 2025**, for our 50th anniversary gala at the [Nashawtuc Country Club!](#)

### *Harvesting the Spirit of Transcendentalism in Education Today:* Wednesday, April 2, 2025, 6-7:45pm

*Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders.*

— Henry David Thoreau



Transcendentalism broke upon the American scene in the 1830s and 40s, led primarily by women and men in Concord, Boston and beyond: **Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Henry David Thoreau, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, Bronson Alcott**, and others. Transcendentalism was a literary, philosophical, spiritual, and reform-minded movement that challenged the materialism of the day and contributed to a range of radical reforms in religion, education, literature, science, and politics.



Although they didn't always agree with each other, the Transcendentalists shared a passion for learning. Their minds were curious, rigorous, far-reaching. They wanted to grow spiritually and explore more deeply the world around them. There was a sense of shared excitement, a drive to learn and grow. They wanted that for others as well and had some ideas about how to reshape education towards that end.

Our panel of modern-day educators will reflect on their own teaching experiences within the broader context of Transcendentalism and this desire to reshape education.

- *Can we find in our own schools some of the seeds they planted so long ago?*
- *Are Transcendentalist ideas on education still alive and well and growing today?*
- *Where can we locate their educational philosophies — innovation, active learning, experiential education, learning outdoors in nature, student-centered learning, new forms of adult education, learning by doing — in the best practices of teachers today?*

These and other questions will be examined by our panelists:

- Rev. **Jenny Rankin**,
- early childhood educator **Betsy Siebert**,
- **Fenn** teacher **Elise Mott**, and
- **Concord-Carlisle High School/Rivers and Revolutions** teacher **Tracie Dunn**.

The event will take place in the Goodwin Forum at the **Concord Free Public Library** and is co-sponsored by the **Transcendentalism Council of First Parish**. This event honors CCC's 50th anniversary and is also part of the **Concord250** celebrations.

The evening is free of charge and open to the public; however, seating is limited, and attendees are requested to please **register in advance**.



### Fund for CCC Update

To date, the Fund for CCC has received **over \$95,700** in commitments from current and past families and staff, grandparents and special friends, and corporations. Fund for CCC donations benefit areas across the school, including **professional development, tuition assistance, outdoor play spaces, special programs, and competitive salaries for our educators**. **[Make your donation today!](#)**



### CCC's Second Night at the Museum a Big Success!

CCC's second Night at the **Discovery Museum** on **Sunday, February 2**, was a big success, filled with splashing, playing, learning, fun and pizza!



## For Your Calendar

### Upcoming Dates

- Friday, March 7: Signed enrollment agreements and summer applications due.
- Wednesday, March 12: March Board meeting.
- Friday, March 14: Professional day - CCC closed.

### Subscribe to the CCC Calendar

Stay current on events at CCC by subscribing to the [on-line calendar](#).



- Wednesday, April 2, 6pm: Panel discussion, [Harvesting the Spirit of Transcendentalism in Education Today](#).
- Monday, April 21: Patriots Day - CCC closed.
- Tuesday, April 22-Friday, April 25: optional days.

Select which events you want to be kept informed about and stay up to date!

## CCC Board Updates

### Join the Board!

As a non-profit, CCC is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors that is primarily responsible for the Center's financial and organizational oversight. Board meetings are held every other month and are open to all families.

We are always seeking Board and Board committee members. In particular, we are seeking community members with accounting/financial management skills to join the Board Finance Committee. Please contact [CCC Executive Director Suzie Kornblum](#) if you are interested in getting involved with the work of the Board or its committees (Advancement, Finance, Long-Range Planning, Nominating, and Personnel).

### 2024-25 Board Members

*Christina Anderson, Chair*  
*Grace Giles, Vice-Chair*  
*Jackie Fishbein, Secretary*  
*Stephan Bader, Treasurer*  
*Elie Adam*  
*Phil Barr*  
*Amantha Butler*  
*Sean Hetherman*  
*Susan Kelly*  
*Isabelle Lechauve (CCC staff rep)*  
*Katherine Manning*  
*Sarah Sample*  
*Shannon Sweeney*  
*Jordan Zirkel (CCC staff rep)*

## Community News & Events

### March 6 Panel Discussion *Literacy Liberates: Bringing Literacy to Light*

This event is part of the *Transforming Childhood: Expertise, Innovation, and Community Engagement* series.

**LITERACY LIBERATES**  
BRINGING LITERACY TO THE LIGHT

March 6th, 2025, 6:30pm-8:30pm  
 CCHS Auditorium  
 500 Walden Street, Concord, MA 01742

Register at: [ConcordSEPAC.org](http://ConcordSEPAC.org)

**Featuring**  
**Kareem Weaver**

**Expert Panel**  
 Milly Arbaje-Thomas, MSW  
 CEO, METCO  
 Eavan Miles Mason, Ph.D.  
 CEO, KidCenterED  
 Katherine Tarca, M.Ed.  
 Director of Humanities & Literacy,  
 MA DESE

Brought to you by the Concord & Concord-Carlisle SEPAC in partnership with our co-sponsors:

What will be written in the history books about how we cared for our kids?

## Concord250: Celebrating 250 Years of American Spirit by Honoring Concord's Leading Role in the Birth of our Country

The 250th anniversary of the battles of Lexington and Concord on **April 19** is fast approaching! There are events for everyone in the family taking place around town to celebrate this milestone (including CCC's [April 2 educational panel](#) outlined above!). Visit the

[Concord250 website](#) for complete information, including a [complete list of events](#) and [information on how to navigate and enjoy the holiday weekend](#).



Concord Children's Center | [concordchildrenscenter.org](http://concordchildrenscenter.org)



Concord Children's Center | 1300 Main Street | Concord, MA 01742 US

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