



October 2010

Robert D. Wilson Elementary

Early Intervention

Using Music and Art with Children with Autism or Other Learning Disabilities

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Music and art can help increase learning for children, particularly those who have autism or other learning disabilities, since these activities provide unique sensory input and stimulation to the mind and body. Music and art can engage physical and mental focus for tasks.

When children have success with music and art, you may see an

increase in self-confidence, in the use of proper social skills, and in overall communication.

Here Are Some Music Activities You Can Use?

- Play soft, soothing music as children are working in class or playing quietly at home.
- Play/sing songs with repetitive words or choruses that make learning fun (alphabet songs, songs that teach math facts, songs that give direction: "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes," "Hokey Pokey," "I'm a Little Teapot").
- Sing songs with an echo microphone or

- "pretend microphone."
- Make simple musical instruments with things you find at home: rice tambourines, spoons with pots and pans, plastic milk cartons with small pebbles inside, paper towel rolls, etc. Be creative!



"Even if something is left undone, everyone must take time to sit still and watch the leaves turn."

- Elizabeth Lawrence



Learning Support

We hope everyone had a great summer vacation. We continue to work in the SRA reading program. The students are working in SRA Word Attack Skills, Decoding Strategies, Application Skills, and in the Reading Mastery Plus Program. Our goal is to improve skills in phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. We will be using the Gray Oral Reading Test and DIBELS to monitor student progress. Parent support at home is important so that students increase their reading rate and fluency.

The students are also working in the SRA Spelling program. The students will be learning various pronunciation, meaning, proofreading and writing strategies. Their weekly tests will consist of challenge words, core words, and review words.

In mathematics, the students will work in the Saxon Math Program. They will need to continue to get support at home on completing their Saxon Math homework assignments. They will also need to continue getting support on

their addition, subtraction, and multiplication facts. The students will be taking written and fact assessments after every five lessons. They will also take standardized tests after various lessons.

Parents, please keep helping your children with their homework assignments throughout the school year. Your support in enhancing education is deeply appreciated.

Pre-Kindergarten

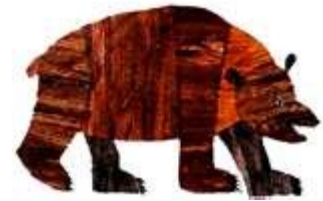
"The ordinary acts we practice every day at home are of more importance to the soul than their simplicity might suspect" by Thomas Moore.

Our students are adjusting to the routines of their school environment. Please discuss school routines with your children daily. We are encouraging your children to be responsible for their belongings and classroom procedures. Simply allowing your children to help unpack their backpack with you at home or practicing putting on their coats will instill some sense of confidence in your little ones.

We are also enjoying singing, listening to stories, sharing our ideas and playing with new friends. We have also been painting, cutting, gluing and coloring with markers and crayons. The students have been recognizing and identifying colors and shapes. Please practice these concepts and skills at home with your children. Try playing games like hunting for shapes and colors in your environment or "I spy" with colors and shapes. Games are a great way to review with your children.

Our students have been creating their own version of Bill Martin Jr.

and Eric Carle's book *Brown Bear Brown Bear What Do You See?*. They are very excited about sharing it with everyone at home. During October we will be working on fire prevention, our "All About Me" book, Halloween and harvest projects. We will also be having a Halloween carnival. Our children do not dress up for Halloween for safety purposes, but we make sure that the carnival is full of fun for everyone.



Kindergarten

Kindergarten has gotten off to a great start this year. We are working nicely in a daily routine and learning our way around the classroom. Everyone has enjoyed the first few weeks of school together.

The children are busy learning and practicing the letters of the alphabet. We use an ABC line to help us put them in ABC order. When we practice naming the letters, they are all mixed up. We have begun to work on letter sounds. We listen for Mm, Ss, Tt and Rr at the beginning and ending of words. We listen for the short vowel sound for Aa at the beginning

and in the middle of words. Counting words in sentences, counting syllables in words and listening for and saying rhyming words have been part of our activities.

Sorting shapes is a fun activity for us in math. We look at many different attributes and find all kinds of ways to sort shapes and other objects. Many of our math learning games give us practice with our numbers 1-10 and some include the teen numbers. Our daily calendar activities provide us with practice in counting and patterns. Naming the days of the week and the months of the year are also

part of our calendar activities.

Please remember to check backpacks each evening, and try to help your child develop the daily habit of taking out notes and projects. Many important notes are sent home to keep you informed about what is happening at school. The children are also eager to show what activities they have completed and brought home.



"October is crisp days and cool nights, a time to curl up around the dancing flames and sink into a good book."





First Grade

September has been an exciting month for our new first grade students. The children have done a beautiful job over the summer practicing their letters, sounds and first grade sight word list. We began the month learning new routines as we familiarize our new students with the first grade curriculum.

In math we are working on the recognition and printing of numerals as well as skip counting, graphing and patterns. In reading we continue with the 90 minute reading block that begins in the morning after breakfast. Our focus is fluency, comprehension, learning new vocabulary and eventually reading with expression. We will also be using questions that will encourage your child to think and discover

the deeper meaning and discuss their answers. Reading a story more than once is a great way to practice becoming a more fluent reader. We also have started our journal entries. This is a time for the children to express their thoughts on paper. Grammar and spelling is not the focus but neatness counts. Sometimes students get stuck on the spelling of a word which interrupts their thought process and their writing does not flow.

Finally, homework will be given Monday through Thursday each week. The purpose of homework in first grade is to practice a skill that has been taught that day or during the week in which the homework was assigned. A reading log was also sent home in order to track

nightly readings. Students need to read and/or be read to nightly in order to become great readers. Also, it teaches the students to be responsible and set up a routine that will continue throughout their educational careers. Completing homework, early bed times and a good breakfast in the morning are all important factors that will help your child be the best student he/she can be. The home-school connection is essential in making a positive impact on your child's education. They are counting on us to help them have an exciting and productive school year!



Second Grade

Second grade has "fallen" right back into a new school year with a very successful start. We recently began our first theme in reading, entitled "Being Me". This theme stresses the importance of being yourself. This is an important lesson at any age.

We will be continuing our math program entitled. "Mastering Math Facts!" We ask that you work with your child to develop "fast facts", or facts committed to memory. We will be working toward speed and accuracy goals for addition and subtraction.

Second grade students have been introduced to the First in Math on-line program; www.firstinmath.com. Individual user ID's and passwords were sent home in September so students could immediately begin using it anywhere they have internet access. This fast-paced, fun web site compliments our math curriculum as it strengthens math skills and concepts!

Finally just a few reminders:

Homework folders should be returned **daily**. Also, please be sure to read **with** your child each evening, remembering to document it on their monthly reading log with an **adult** signature. We truly believe, "Reading is Succeeding!"

Homework is practice in being a responsible student. Please always encourage your child to put forth their **personal best efforts!**

It is important that your child attend school regularly and in a timely fashion; our school day begins at 8:30.

Thank you for entrusting your children to us, we look forward to being their companion's in learning this school year!



Third Grade

The third grade students have had a very busy time. They are now on the second floor. The students have lockers to use for their back packs, lunches, and jackets. They are responsible for keeping everything neat and organized in their lockers along with their desks.

The children have been learning cursive handwriting. All the students are working on their lower case letters and soon will be learning the upper case letters. They will need to practice their writing at home.

Math is all about place value, number order, and addition of larger numbers. The children are busy working on their basic math facts. Problem solving strategies are practiced throughout the different concepts in math.

The students will be using the science lab for different activities. Each group of students will be in the lab one day out of the six day cycle. The children are learning about magnetism and electricity.

In social studies, we will begin "Unit 1 People Build Communities". The children will be learning that the things people do for work and for fun often depend on where a community is located. All communities have some things in common and each one is special in its own way. In Chapter 1 we will read about what makes a community.

In health class our third-graders have started the "Second-Step" Program. We are learning problem solv-

ing strategies and behavioral social skills.

We are completing the first theme called "Something Special" in reading. The students read about people and characters that discover that their own ideas, interests, and abilities are special. The children learn that discovering their own special qualities helps them earn the appreciation of others and gain a better understanding of themselves.

The students are enjoying the changes in the environment. The days are still warm but the nights are cool. The leaves are turning beautiful colors and are starting to fall. Before we know it, daylight savings time and Halloween will be upon us.



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Fourth Grade

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Fourth Grade would like to welcome everyone back to another school year. We've had some time to get used to new rules and expectations. We'd like to take this time to remind you of some important fourth grade information.

Each student was given a reading log for the first marking period. Students are expected to log their reading every night. A parent signature is required on our reading log.

We are well underway with rocket math. Be sure to practice those multiplication facts every night.

Students log their homework in the assignment book each day. Important papers are kept in homework folders.

Remembering these things will help make 4th grade a little easier.

Some important skills we've been learning in math are : place value, addition and subtraction, and multiplication and division facts. In reading class we've been learning to be better readers by learning about : narrative elements, prefixes, suffixes, and locating information.

Autistic Support

This school year has started off wonderfully! All of our students have been working super hard and learning lots of new and exciting things! Throughout the month of September, we have been learning all about each other and our likes and dislikes. We have learned that many of our students really like "gluten-free" foods. So if you would like to send in a special treat that the whole class can share on a special day, we would ask that you send in "gluten-free" snacks so that everyone can share.

The students also got to make life-sized "self-portraits" of each other and showed us what they thought they looked like. The students loved to see their portraits hanging up for our annual "Open House". For an upcoming special classroom project, I would like to ask all of our families to send in any special recipes they have that they would like to share with our classroom. We would like to have all the recipes in by Halloween.

We're sure this school year will continue to be the best one yet! And an extra special thank you to all of the parents and guardians who have sent me different websites and activities for children with autism. We love to learn about and share all of these special events with other parents, so keep them coming!

Fifth Grade

The fifth grade team would like to thank all the parents for coming out to our open house on September 21, 2010. Having the continued connection between home and school creates the most beneficial environment for our students. They are busy learning about many new and exciting ideas.

In health, the students have focused their time on ways to deal with different social behaviors of others, such as gossiping and lying. They have learned several calming strategies to use in all these situations. Please ask your children about these strategies and how they can be used.

In reading, the students have just finished the first theme "Look Inside." The focus of the theme was to explore how a character grows and changes through life event's by looking within themselves. The next theme we will be exploring is "Team Work" in this theme we will be discussing and using team-



work to understand characters and the stories.

In science, the students are currently working through a unit of study on 'Simple Machines'. The culminating task will be to complete a short biography on the great scientist Leonardo DaVinci.

In social studies, the students will be investigating the histories of the native people of the Western and Eastern Hemispheres, and learn about Native American people who lived in North America when Columbus arrived. Challenge your child to think like an archaeologist and generate a list of Native American artifacts found on a recent dig!

Also please continue to check your child's homework book nightly for assignments. This again helps keep that home-school connection that creates a