



APRIL 2011

Elementary

EARLY INTERVENTION

Fun Ways to Teach Children How to Write the Letters of the Alphabet

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Super Duper Handy
Handouts #231

There are many fun ways to help a child learn to form the letters of the alphabet. Here are some “handy” tools and tips:

Chalk—Write a letter using chalk on the driveway or a chalkboard. Have the child trace your letter then try to write the letter by him/herself.

Sand table or the beach—Write a letter in wet or dry sand using your finger/hand or a stick. Have the child trace your letter and try writing the letter without assistance.

Sandpaper—Use a die-cut machine to cut out (or trace and cut out) the alphabet on pieces of sandpaper. The child can trace the cutouts with his/her fingers to feel the shape of each letter.

Glitter, cinnamon, or sugar—Put a generous amount of glitter, cinnamon, or sugar on a baking sheet. Have the child write a letter with his/her finger. Let him/her “shake out” the letter after he/she writes it.

Dry-erase board—Have the child trace/write a letter on a dry-erase board. Use a different color for each letter.

Paint—Help the child paint a letter with finger paint or with a paintbrush.

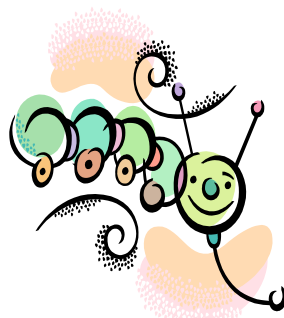
Cookies—Make cookie dough, and then cut the dough with the cookie cutters. Help the child spell words such as “cat,” “Mom,” “Dad,” etc. with the baked cookies.

Highlighter—Use a highlighter to write the child’s name on a piece of paper. Have the child use a pencil to trace the letters.



PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Throughout April we will sharpen our alphabetical, numerical and rhyming skills by creating books, reviewing, practicing and using learning games that focus on the mastery of these readiness principles. Our phonemic awareness and literacy activities are becoming more involved and comprehensive. Please pay careful attention to the projects we send home. They are intended to help your young learners become proficient readers in kindergarten. As you continue to read daily to your children, focus on the illustrations and how the words of the story relate to the pictures.



“There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it’s going to be a butterfly.”

Richard Buckminster
Fuller

As Easter approaches we will explore mixing colors by dyeing eggs, have an egg hunt and create art projects to go with our literature. Earth Day will bring with it much discussion about responsibility and taking care of the world around us. We plan to clean up the school grounds as part of our way of taking care of the Earth.

We will be using Eric Carle’s literature to create projects and familiarize the children with his work. Most children enjoy Eric Carle’s simple text, elaborate illustrations and repetitious style. Eric Carle’s story “The Very

Hungry Caterpillar” will be used as our retelling sample for our writing portfolios. Please encourage your children to tell you about “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” and ask them which other Eric Carle stories they heard at school. This will be a great opportunity to promote discussion and language with your children.



KINDERGARTEN

Everyone in kindergarten is anxious for some nice spring weather. We have; talked , read and wrote about spring. Now everyone just wants to see it arrive. The children cannot wait to get outside and play in the spring air and puddles.

The children have been growing taller and wiser. They have been working hard and learning many new skills. Between the many sight words now recognized and being able to sound out words, students can now pick up many books and be successful with them. With patience and guidance your child can enjoy the wonders of books. Remember to re-read until the words sound like you are talking. Also talk about the books. Ask questions before, during, and after reading. Discuss the characters, setting and sequence of events. These activities will foster comprehension.

In kindergarten there are many

motivating opportunities to write. Use activities and special events that happen at home as a motivator to have your child practice writing. We use capital letters, punctuation and spaces between our words. When we spell sight words, they can be copied from a word list if they are not memorized. All other words can be sounded out. Have your child finger spell the word by putting up a finger for every sound they hear. Then, they can write as many letters to match the sounds in the words as they can. You will be amazed at how close to accurate your child can do this. If you want to show your child the correct spelling, write underneath his or her words and explain why you used the letters you used.

We added the nickel and the quarter to the coins we count. Our goal is to learn the coins names, how much each coin is worth and to be able to count

groups of similar coins. When counting nickels and dimes, we practice counting by 5's and 10's. We continue to look at place value in numbers. When we count each day of school, we look at the hundreds, tens and ones in each number.

Subtraction has been added to our math skills we practice. We use our fingers or counters to figure out the answers until we have them memorized.

For fun have your child illustrate this subtraction problem. There were five birds in the tree. Two birds flew away. How many birds are left in the tree? If your child would like to bring his/her illustration into school to share with the class, it would be appreciated and your child will be rewarded with a treat.

Happy Spring!



FIRST GRADE

Is spring finally here? First grade is ready for some warmer weather! We are anxious to begin some science activities using our FOSS science kits this month. The students will be involved in some experiments dealing with air and water. Then each student will be making a parachute which we will test out on the playground. In reading we continue to work on: long vowels, contractions, blends, oral reading fluency, vocabulary

and comprehension. Please remember to practice those sight words. In math we are counting money, telling time, doing double digit addition and word problems. Wow! Are we busy? Take a minute and have your child put these words in alphabetical order; dog, boy, zoo, red, John, and silly. Bring the list in for a sticker and a treat!

The students will be taking their first standardized test called the Terra

Nova's this month. Please remember a good night sleep, as well as a healthy breakfast, will help prepare your child for this important assessment.

Finally, please continue to read between 15-30 minutes each night. It is wonderful to read to your child but it is also very important to have your child read to you each night. The way to become the best reader you can be is to practice, practice, practice!

SECOND GRADE

The students are looking forward to warmer weather and the signs of Spring. We will be planning some special Easter activities in our classes.

First in Math is a fun way to review and strengthen math skills such as money, time, basic facts and problem solving. Make sure you check it out!

Reading comprehension can be developed using library books. After your child finishes reading a library book, ask questions: *Who* was in the story? *Where* were they? *What* did they do? *How* did

they do it? What happened at the *beginning, middle, and end* of the story?

Prompt your child to give answers that are complete, make sense and help you understand the story, even though you may have not read or heard it. This helps your child think about what was read and be a more effective independent reader

Students will participate in Terra Nova assessments this month. Reading and math skills will be tested. You cannot study for these tests. You can make sure your child is well rested and feeling positive!



THIRD GRADE

How wonderful it is to see the signs of spring around us! Our third grade students deserve a great big round of applause for their hard work on the PSSA's. We hope to see continued success throughout the spring.

The science fair was another big success! It was so nice to see the creative work of our budding scientists! Thank you parents for your efforts at home with the projects.

Parents, did you know that if your child read 20 minutes five nights a week, he/she will have read 400 minutes in a month!

That's incredible! Please continue to encourage your child to read each night for 15-30 minutes. Coming up in May is our last oral fluency assessment. The goal for our third grade students is to read 110wpm in May. Please support your child and their efforts to read orally at home.

Currently, in our reading series, we are exploring different ways in which people can be good neighbors and ways in which neighbors can help each other. This is always a great topic that allows students to share the personal experiences they have

with good neighbors. Perhaps you and your child can share a story about a time when neighbors were generous or helpful to your family.

In math we continue to study multiplication and division. This is always an exciting skill for third grade students.

Lastly, don't let "Spring Fever" keep our students from completing their nightly homework. Remind them to end the third quarter strong!

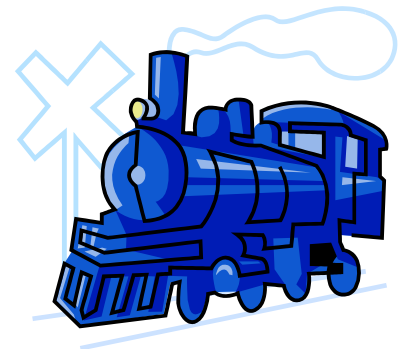
FOURTH GRADE

Fourth grade students will be taking the science PSSA April 5 and 6. Please refer to the packet that was sent home for some things that you can do to help your child do their best. In science class this month students are working on an environment unit.

In social studies class we will be learning about our new country and changes that are taking place. One topic will be new forms of transportation. At the end of this month

we will have our Roebling Bridge pre-site visit. Look for information about the Roebling Bridge to go home at the end of this month. **EARN AN I CAUGHT YOU CARD:** Write down a fact you learned about the Roebling Bridge from our pre-site visit and hand it in to Mrs. Vinton.

Our reading theme this month is Creative Minds. Our stories will be about characters that solve problems creatively. Some important skills will be sequence, main idea and details.



SCIENCE FAIR

The science fair was held on Tuesday, March 8, 2011. It was a huge success. The students, parents, and teachers had a wonderful time viewing the 200 plus projects. There were even projects that you could taste. A big thank you goes out to the teachers,

staff, administration, and parents who help to make this fair a success. See you next year.



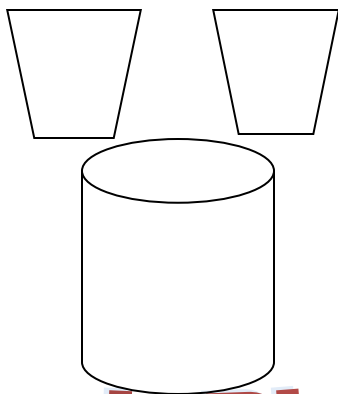
FIFTH GRADE

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The fifth grade students have wrapped up the last of their science lessons within the Mixtures and Solutions science module. The students completed numerous labs involving: creating solutions, determining concentration, and experimenting with chemical reactions.


All fifth grade students will be corresponding with a fifth grade student from Lake Elementary via pen pal letters. It won't be long before they will be joining one another to form the class of 2018.

Although the PSSA exams are completed, the academic requirements of our fifth graders are not completed yet. We will be exploring many new mathematical concepts as well as expanding our reading skills and strategies for comprehension. Please continue to review your child's homework log book on a nightly basis.



Book Picks

 *Sir Cumference and the First Round Table* (Cindy Neuschwander) is a clever look at geometry. Cute names –the king's son is Radius–and clear diagrams will teach your youngster about shapes and geometric relationships.

 Learning about the solar system is fun when planets tell the story themselves. Dan Green's *Astronomy: Out of This World!* Contains fascinating facts and details along with cartoon illustrations your child is sure to love.

