



APRIL 2010

NEWSLETTER



EARLY INTERVENTION

Drive Your Way to Better Speech and Language Skills

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Use these simple and fun ideas to turn your ride in the car into wonderful language learning opportunities.

Naming Objects in Categories
(And They Won't Even Know They're Doing It!)

Up for a little fun? Then give these two games a try! Play a version of the game, "I'm going on a trip, and I'm

going to take _____." Set the stage by going first and giving an example such as, "I'm going on a picnic, and I am going to eat a sandwich. What are you going to eat?" Have your children name as many food items as they can. Variations of this game include the beach, park, pool, mountains, toy store, etc. Another fun game to play in the car is the "category game." This game works by one person thinking of a category and everybody trying to name things that fit in that category. Take turns and start a new category when someone can't think of anything to name. Use broad

categories like colors, toys, or things in the sky. For more of a challenge, narrow the categories by adding two or more criteria (i.e., green vegetables). Make both these games into memory games by having each person attempt to remember the items and name each item before adding one of his/her own. These games enhance a child's ability to think of and name items in specific categories.



"Poor, dear, silly Spring, preparing her annual surprise!"

- Wallace Stevens

AUTISTIC SUPPORT

The following article is something that I found on <http://www.autismteachingtools.com>. Because we have been doing so many different activities in the classroom involving social skills, I thought that this might be a great activity to do at home to build the same skills:

Lots of children like to cook. It helps them feel self-sufficient and capable. And it's fun to eat the results. Build on that motivation, if they have it, to encourage pretending in the following ways.

Have your child help you cook. Use simple directions and have them physically participate as much as possible (stirring, adding ingredients, rolling dough, cutting with cookie cutters or dull knives.)

Using realistic looking equivalents to real food, and realistic play equivalents to kitchen ware, pretend to cook different dishes. Try to engage your child to stir food in a pretend pot, fry food in a pretend pan, and serve the food onto play dishes. Follow through with a pretend meal if possible. Remember to enjoy your pretend food with exaggerated eating and drinking noises.

Encourage your child to take out pots and pans, and pretend to put food in them. Make lots of exclamations of delight over the smells and tastes and be sure to ask what they are making, and what they are putting into the pot. You will very likely have to model this, or get a peer to model this. Pretend to spill something on them or on yourself. Have them get an

imaginary towel to clean it up. Make sure that they are doing, not just watching you.

Your child can also participate in multiple play and imaginary cooking scenarios with peers. Bring in the peers and encourage your child to participate with them instead of yourself.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN



As Easter approaches we will dye eggs and taste them, and participate in an egg hunt. We will also create 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.

It is a wonderful experience when our students begin to understand how letters of the alphabet and their sounds create words. We



hope that you will begin to notice your children paying closer attention to the stories you read and how the sentences relate to the pictures in the story. During April we will use Eric Carle's literature to make that correlation within the classroom by creating projects and familiarizing our 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 for our retelling sample in our writ-

ing portfolio.

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 the children bring home because they are intended to help your young learners become proficient readers in kindergarten.

KINDERGARTEN

Everyone in kindergarten is anxious for some nice spring weather. We have talked about spring, read books about spring, and wrote about spring. Now everyone just wants to see spring 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 so hard and learning so many new skills. Between the many sight words now recognized and the ability to sound out many words, students can now pick up many books and be successful readers. With patience and guidance your child can enjoy the wonders of books. Remember to re-read until the words sound like you are having a conversation. Remember to 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 write words. 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 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

March has been a busy month in first grade. The students have been working very hard reading fluently and becoming more accurate readers. We also began working on long vowels, which you will see in the decodable books that come home each week, contractions and inflections. Please continue to read to your child each night and also give your child the opportunity to read to you. Remember reading the same story more than once will help your child understand the text and read with expression. The more children read the better readers they become.

In math we have been working with place value, greater than, less than and equal to. Some of our students are well into Rocket Math subtraction. We are also working on counting

mixed coins, telling time, problem solving and double digit addition and subtraction. With credit cards, debit cards and writing checks children rarely have the opportunity to play with coins. Familiarizing your child with different coins will help them greatly now and in the future.

Our new science kits are amazing! The children are learning by exploring different materials that pertain to air and weather. Be sure to ask your child how air moved their balloons through the classroom.

In April we will observe our caterpillars as they turn into beautiful Painted Lady butterflies and release them as the temperature gets warmer. The students will be given their first standardized

test this month. Getting to bed early and eating breakfast will help prepare your child for the hard work they do at school. Packing a healthy snack for the afternoon will give them the extra energy they need to finish the day strong. We have high expectations for our students and we appreciate the hard work you do at home reinforcing the important skills and concepts that your child needs in order to achieve their personal best.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
-Margaret Meade



SECOND GRADE



Second grade is looking forward to spring and the nice weather it brings. While the students are looking for things growing outside, they might not realize how much they've been growing all winter! Reading, writing and math skills have been increasing throughout the year. Here are some suggestions for encouraging their emerging skills.

We have completed our direct instruction in telling time to 5 minutes and counting elapsed time. For continued practice, draw your child's attention to the clock, particularly the "big hand, little hand" type, and talk about the time. Tell your child how many minutes until something will be happening, or the exact time something is expected. Using the clock in real life situations gives children a reason for learning this skill. Likewise, our formal lessons on counting money and making change have concluded. By giving your child opportunities to count real coins, you show that there is a real life purpose to learning this skill. With many families using credit and debit cards rather than cash, children have fewer occasions to handle coins, unless you make it happen for your child.

Many of the second graders are interested in expanding their reading and trying chapter books. If your child is not ready to try independent reading at this level, consider choosing a chapter book as your read aloud book. Many are available with short chapters. One chapter might take only 15 minutes to read aloud--great for nightly reading logs! Children can listen and follow the story plot before they have the ability to read it on their own. And even after they become independent readers, children enjoy listening to chapter stories shared with enthusiasm by someone special--you!

Third Grade

The PSSA testing will be taking place this month. The children are working hard getting ready for this test. They need to read carefully, take their time, and work everything out. The children need to be well rested everyday for the test.

The Science Fair was a huge success. The third grade projects were fantastic. The children did a wonderful job. Everyone had a great time including Ms. Savage. The children are waiting for the butterflies to emerge. Ms. Savage's class is also waiting for the luna moth to emerge.

In reading the children are working on fact and opinion. They are also learning the difference between regular fiction and historical fiction. This is a difficult task. If the children believe the opinion stated they believe it to be fact.

In math the children are working on multiplication facts. The children are learning their times-tables. They need to practice these at home. They are also working on addition and subtraction of fractions, equal fractions, and mixed numbers.



" We do not inherit the earth from our fathers, we instead borrow it from our children."

FOURTH GRADE

We enjoyed seeing all of the wonderful projects at the Science Fair. Students really worked hard! Just a reminder, fourth graders should be spending time every night at home reading and practicing math facts. All fourth graders are expected to be on division rocket math by now. Our goal is to be finished with division by the end of the school year.

Topics that we will be covering in April:

1. Social Studies-We will be learning about the Civil War. Look for a

study guide to be used to help prepare for our test. It will be sent home about a week before the test.

2. Science-Students will begin their unit on the environment. They will also be taking the Science PSSA in the month of April.
3. Health-We are asking that students still try to make healthy choices when eating.

Parents, you can reinforce healthy nutrition at home by helping your child choose a healthy lunch or snack to bring to school.

We will be taking reading and math PSSA in the beginning of April. On test days, please encourage your child to do his or her best. Getting a good night's sleep and eating a good breakfast will help too.



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Ms. Donleavy's Room

"It takes some children longer than others to rise to the occasion. Remember to give them time and not rush to fix a problem that may adjust itself."

In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.
~Margaret Atwood



FIFTH GRADE

Welcome Spring!!!! During the Fourth Quarter all 5th grade students will be studying the 50 states and capitals. Please review the states and capitals with your child daily. During science we will be conducting research within groups on a provided topic and related scientist. Please ask your child how the research is going and what they have discovered as a result of their research.

TITLE 1

Everyone has worked very hard this year learning, practicing, and improving skills. To make sure this hard work shows on the upcoming Terra Nova and PSSA testing, here are a few things that can be done to help our students do their best and shine.

1. Get a good night rest. You can't put your best foot forward if you are tired.
2. Eat a good breakfast. That way you will be thinking of the test and not your hungry stomach.
3. Come to school on time and with a good attitude. Smile and others will smile back. That makes both of you feel good.

Our Title 1 Awards Night is coming up on April 23rd. Keep that date open. We all have a great time. Notices will be forthcoming. Keep a lookout for them and get your reservations in early.

Quotation of the month on Education:

The attention of children must be lured, caught, and held, like a shy wild animal that must be coaxed with bait to come close. If the situations, the materials, the problems before a child do not interest him, then no amounts of exhortations or threats will bring it back.

John Holt

LEARNING SUPPORT

April is the start of the spring season.

In reading, we'll continue our adventure with SRA Corrective Reading to improve phonemic awareness, word attack skills, vocabulary, and fluency. The students have also been working in SRA Mastery to improve their comprehension skills. We have been working on reading passages, answering comprehension questions, and completing open ended questions to prepare our students for the upcoming PSSA tests.

In spelling and phonics, we will be working on long vowels, prefixes, suffixes, antonyms, synonyms, and homonyms. In grammar the students have been working in SRA Practicing Standard Usage. They've completed skills on subject-verb agreement, irregular verbs, and pronouns. They also have been improving their writing skills by completing assignments in SRA Reasoning and Writing.

In Saxon Mathematics, we'll continue working on addition and subtraction with multiple regroupings, multiplication, division, word problems, roman numerals, telling time to the minute, adding money, symmetry, fractions, polygons and measurement. We have also been working on various math worksheets to prepare for the PSSA tests.



2009–2010 SCIENCE FAIR RESULTS

The Science Fair held on March 9, 2010 was a huge success. We had 200 students participate in the fair. The judges had a tough time choosing winners. The winners received the following prizes:

1st place - book, certificate, pencil, eraser, science activity, \$25 gift certificate and ribbon

2nd place - book, certificate, pencil, eraser, ribbon, science activity, and \$20 gift certificate

3rd place - book, certificate, pencil, eraser, ribbon, science activity and \$15 gift certificate.

Honorable mention- book, certificate, pencil, eraser, ribbon, kit.

The winners were as follows:

Kindergarten - 1st Leah Brundage, 2nd Sarah Collins, 3rd Ryan Vinton Honorable Mention-Rebecca Boots, Braydon Christian.

First Gr. - 1st -Michael Kromko, 2nd Joshua Burrier, 3rd Kyle Shaffer, Honorable Mention- Brooke Durso, Courtney Petrilak

Second Gr. -1st Jacob McCormick- , 2nd-Isabella Zeiler, 3rd- Alex Amorine , Honorable Mention – Kali Haught, Nicolas Gombita

Third Gr. - 1st -Annie Skirpan & Emilie Bifano, 2nd -Jillian Dudley, 3rd -Alexis Rousseau, Honorable Mention – Krystal Tregaskis, Lyn Thorpe & T.J.Hess

Fourth Gr. - 1st -Eddie Jellock, 2nd -Grace Alvarez, 3rd -Spencer Smith, Honorable Mention-Dylan Ursino, Lilli Milion & Lauren Courtright.

Fifth Gr. - 1st -Molly Nagle, 2nd -Rachel Roberts, 3rd -Dylan McArthur, Honorable Mention- Jarad Kizer, Nathan Pauselli

All children who participated received a certificate, ribbon, an eraser, and a pencil.

A special thank you to everyone involved, especially the teachers and the parents who helped with the set-up.

