



ROBERT D. WILSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

February 2011 Newsletter

EARLY INTERVENTION

Puzzles—Toys...or Teaching Tools? by Becky L. Spivey, M.Ed. & Susie S. Loraine, M.A., CCC-SLP

Super Duper Handy Handout 245

Puzzles are games that help us learn and practice a multitude of skills like visual perception and analysis, fine-motor control, project completion, and patience.

What we may take for granted as a "toy" is actually a very valuable teaching tool!

For Example:

Old-Fashioned Wooden Peg Puzzles—or puzzles with large plastic or foam pieces that each have a complete picture—are a great place to begin for toddlers and young children. These simple puzzles typically have anywhere from two to 30 large pegged pieces that fit into specific individual spaces in a background tray. They help foster hand-eye coordination, spatial concepts, and problem solving. You can find puzzles like these to help teach shapes, numbers, letters, animals, home life, etc. Introduce a puzzle with the fewest

pieces first, then gradually present puzzles with increased numbers of pieces and complexity. Encourage speech and vocabulary development while playing with puzzles by naming the pieces for the children and having them repeat the names—*"This is a cow. A cow says 'Moo!' Now, you say 'cow'."* If children try to fit pieces in the wrong spaces, let them at first. Give them the chance to explore the shapes of each piece and space. Help them look at the shape's features: straight edges, curves, and points. Use hand-over-hand help as necessary.

PREKINDERGARTEN

"Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation." [John F. Kennedy](#) (1917-1963) *Thirty-fifth President of the USA*

Throughout January we spent our days practicing the numerals zero through ten. The children enjoyed counting out items for corresponding numbers. Please continue using the number activities that we have sent home with the children. The number books that the children created can be used for counting, numeral identification and allowing your children to "read" them to you.

During February we plan to read about, discuss and create projects for Groundhog's Day, dental health, Valentine's Day and President's Day. We will continue to read folktales and recite nursery rhymes. Try acting out some nursery rhymes with your children, it's a fun way to review the rhymes at home. The kitchen areas and grocery stores will be set up in our classrooms. These areas will be used to develop social skills, fine motor skills, visual discrimination and eye-hand coordination. Most importantly, these areas give our students the opportunity to create, explore, experiment, pretend and play. Ask your children about the kitchen and grocery store areas. Allow them to explain how they use the materials and what they like most about them.

Letter and numeral identification will be important skills for

kindergarten. Please continue using the alphabet and number activities that we have sent home with the children.

Please continue to talk and read with you children. Add some new and challenging activities. When you do something together at home, discuss the process of the activity with your children.

BE MY
VALENTINE!

KINDERGARTEN

Valentine's Day will bring us some fun writing practice. The children are eager and able to write out their own Valentines and look forward to exchanging them on party day.

Without too many snow days, school day 100 should arrive sometime in February. The students have been anxiously counting the days of school. As we get closer and closer, our math skills grow and grow. We now count and recognize numbers 1 to 100. We also count by 10's and 5's to 100. We will celebrate Day 100 with many activities involving the number 100. We will count and write 100 numbers, read and write 100 words and hop, jump or clap 100 times. We will share our 100's projects that were completed at home

with each other. These will also be displayed in the kindergarten hall for others to enjoy as well. Our thanks and appreciation to all who help out with the creation of these projects.

As our students reading skills grow, please take time to practice reading daily. I would like to suggest as part of your reading routine at home to take turns reading, entire books or pages within books. Sight words have increased and their decoding skills have grown to handle 3 to 4 letter words and they make great attempts and progress at many others. With attentive ears to listen to them, encouragement and help with irregular sound combinations, your child can feel quite successful with

many books. Share in their excitement of learning to read.



FIRST GRADE

Brr! The winter has finally come to visit us. The first grade students have been working very hard on these wintry, cold days.

In the new anthology we will work with long vowels, inflections, contractions, word families and variant vowels.

During February we will learn about George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. February is also dental health month. The students will be learning about taking care of their teeth and good dental habits.



We want to remind parents that students should be dressed properly for recess each day. Don't forget to send jackets, snow pants, hats, gloves and boots.

The children really enjoy sending Valentine greetings to their classmates on Valentine's Day. We wish everyone a Happy Valentine's Day!

SECOND GRADE

Second grade students have begun their second reading anthology entitled, Banner Days. We will be exploring and practicing such skills as: cause / effect, making inferences, synonyms, antonyms, suffixes and more!

We've also recently set our sights on the spring DIBELS goal which is a minimum of 90 words per minute. You can assist your child with fluency in several ways.

Read aloud to your child. It's good for your child to read to you, but it is still very important for him / her to hear examples of good reading.

Be reading partners. Take turns reading with your child. You can take turns reading pages and paragraphs or even have your child repeat a sentence or paragraph as they attempt to copy your smooth reading.

Be expressive. Model how to read with expression. Your child is learning how to use different expression when characters in the story have dialogue.

Practice. Before having your child read aloud to you, allow him / her to practice the passage first. This will ensure that your child is familiar with the text and can place their focus on fluency and expression.

The focus of our math lessons has shifted from graph interpretation to counting and identifying mixed coins. We are counting groups of coins by ordering them from greatest to least, then counting on by 25, tens, fives, and ones to reach the total. The best way to practice counting coins is by using the real thing, particularly because of the variety of coins out there! Support your child with opportunities to work with coins in some way. Repeated opportunities to count coins will make the lessons we cover in class both more familiar and meaningful.

Appropriate winter attire is a necessity. We head outdoors with every opportunity, even during these long winter months. Please be sure your child is prepared for outdoor play daily.

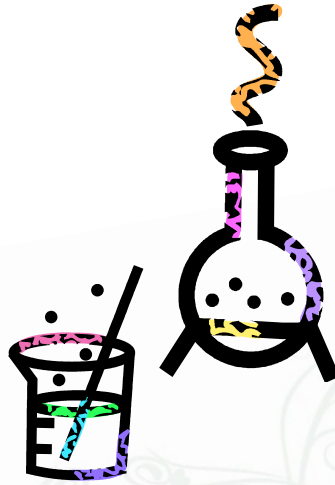
THIRD GRADE

Mark your calendars! It is that time of the year again. March 8, 2011 is the day of the science fair. It will be from 6-8 p.m. This is the fifteenth year for this wonderful event.

Every year more and more students participate. There are more people attending every year. The public enjoys seeing the wonderful projects. This is an opportunity for our children to use their creativity, imagination, and science knowledge.

Children are naturally curious. An excellent way to teach them to develop problem solving skills is to direct this curiosity toward scientific investi-

gation. Parents, it is a wonderful opportunity to do a fun activity with your children..



The children have received the information packet already. The library has wonderful books to help the students and parents find ideas for projects/experiments. All children that participate are asked to attend the fair, if possible, to demonstrate their projects to the public.

Please come and support this event. Can you guess what the mystery object is? Come check it out and enter the contest!



FOURTH GRADE

What We Have Been Doing:

- *Science:* We are experimenting with energy, including electrical energy, sound energy, mechanical energy, chemical energy, and heat energy.
- *Social studies:* We are learning how the American Revolution was the beginning of the United States of America.
- *Health:* We are learning about nutrition and how to make good decisions for our bodies.
- *Reading:* We are drawing conclusions, comparing and contrasting, and summarizing as we read stories in Theme 3.
- *Math:* We are working on measurement and geometry.
- *Writing:* We are organizing and writing five paragraph essays.

What You Can Do At Home:

If your child has not mastered multiplication facts, encourage him or her to practice them for a few minutes each night. Ideas: Learn one new fact a night. Write it repeatedly. Say it aloud repeatedly. Before you know it, you will have mastered all of the facts! All 4th grade students must master their multiplication facts by the end of the second marking period.

Ensure that your child reads nightly for 15 – 30 minutes. Record the reading on the reading log, which needs to be handed in at the end of the marking period.

Review with your child frequently. Science, social studies, and health tests in 4th grade are not open book; it is necessary for students to study.

Look for the blue homework folders in your child's backpack every night. Check it over to make sure that your child is filling out his or her **Homework Assignment Booklet** and completing homework assignments. Together, we can ensure that your child has a successful year!

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FIFTH GRADE

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Fifth grade students are very busy preparing for the upcoming PSSA testing. This testing will take place in the month of March. It is very important that students attend school on a regular basis so they can benefit from both the review of previously taught lessons as well as instruction on test taking skills and strategies. Fifth grade students will be formerly assessed on Mathematics, Reading, and Writing. If you have any questions regarding these tests please contact your child's homeroom teacher. We thank you in advance for encouraging your child to do his/her best on all work.

You may not "carrot" all for me

The way I care for you.



You may not "turnip" your nose

When I plead with you.



But if your "heart" should "beet" with mine

Forever "lettuce" hope.

There is no reason in the world

Why we two "cantalope"



LEARNING SUPPORT

"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence." -Robert Frost

The students will continue to work on the SRA Corrective Reading Decoding Strategies, Reading Mastery and Word Attack Skills. They enjoy reading the short stories and answering the comprehension questions. We'll also continue to work on increasing their reading rate and reading fluency on Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills. The students enjoy charting their progress on their reading rate. They will also continue to work on fluency boxes with vocabulary from the SRA Reading program. In SRA Spelling/Phonics, the students have been increasing their skills on beginning and ending blends, digraphs, prefixes, suffixes, and short and long vowels.

In writing, the students have been improving their skills on subject-verb agreement, capitalization, and punctuation. They also are improving their skills on writing short paragraphs from SRA Reasoning and Writing.

In Saxon Mathematics we have been working on: telling time, money, times tables, division, volume, rounding numbers, exponents, expanded notation, calendar skills, addition and subtraction facts. We have also been completing guided practice skills on: reading problems, open ended questions, line segments, and reading charts and graphs. The kids enjoy working out their math problems on the new promethean board. We will continue to assess the students with written and fact assessments. IEP goals will be assessed with bi-monthly math probes.

Have a Happy Valentine's Day!