

# Robert D. Wilson Elementary

# January



# 2011



## AUTISTIC SUPPORT

With the cold, snowy winter upon us, we are all spending more time "stuck" indoors. Many of us struggle with trying to find new activities to do together on an unexpected snow day. I have found a great article from The Birchtree Center, and it includes all kinds of different activities and games for children with autism to do during the cold winter months.

During the winter months, this is a very common question asked by many parents of children with autism. Although it can be difficult to keep your child engaged in leisure/play activities any time of year, it is especially challenging when the weather is cold and the common outdoor activities, such as playgrounds and walks, are not always possibilities. If you are able to think about adapting the options that are available to all children, you might end up pleasantly surprised that there are enjoyable activities right at your fingertips.

First, think outdoors! Some children do not mind the cold so bundle them up and enjoy

all the snow. Do not be surprised or disappointed that your child might not be interested in the traditional outdoor activities such as building a snowman, sledding or making snow angels. For example, building a snowman takes time and your child might not have the attention span or patience to complete that task; sledding can feel very cold or scary to some children; making snow angels might have little meaning to your child.

However, there are other great things that you can do outside that might be perceived as a lot of fun by your child. For example, take traditional warm weather or indoor activities and play them outside. Playing tag or chase in the snow can be much fun (and great exercise) for all involved. Also, you can take certain indoor toys (such as small cars or plastic building blocks) and allow your child to use them outside in the snow. Your child might associate being outside as more fun when preferred toys are permitted to leave the house.

Now, think indoors! It would be important to continue to rely on your everyday options that are appealing to your child, whether it be toy cars, dolls, music, videos, computers, books, coloring or any of the other play/leisure options that your child enjoys. To add to the routine, however, add in some novel activities as well. For example, fill a plastic tub with fresh snow from outside and bring the snow into your house. You and your child can do many fun and entertaining things with this snow. You can bury small items (e.g., coins, small toys) and have your child hunt for these items. You can create small piles of snow balls together. You can use the snow as a landscape for pushing trains through as a novel platform for this play activity.

Although you might have great amounts of time to occupy with your child, it can feel less overwhelming when you feel that you have some activities to structure the time. Keeping that in mind, using a schedule of some sort can help additionally structure the time. For example, using a picture schedule for younger children and non-readers and using a written list for readers will help create structure to the day. Even if you do not typically use a schedule anymore, it might make a difference on a long weekend day or a snow day. And, doesn't it feel good to check off activities that are completed and your child has enjoyed?! So, remember, stay warm and have some fun; after all, spring will be here soon!

## EARLY INTERVENTION

**Hellos and Goodbyes – Teaching Children to Use Greetings (Super Duper Handy Handouts Number 283)** by Rynette R. Kjesbo, M.S., CCC-SLP  
**Why Teach Greetings?**

Children may find it difficult to use greetings. Some children with autism, children with delayed language skills, and even children who are typically-developing may have difficulty saying "hello" and "goodbye" to other people. Using greetings is an important part in the process of interacting with others to form and maintain friendships.

**Tips to Encourage Children to Use Greetings:**

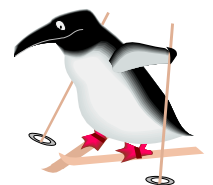
- **Teach Greetings** – Teach your children that when they meet someone, they should tell that person "Hello." When they leave someone, they should say "Goodbye." Talk to them about the various ways to say "hello" and "goodbye" (for example, "Hi." "Hey." "See you later." and "Bye.").

- **Be an Example** – Model the correct way to use greetings for your children. Greet people you know when you meet them and use appropriate parting comments when you leave.

- **Pretend Play** – Create a pretend situation where you and your children practice using greetings during play. For example, pretend you are a customer in your children's store or pretend you are talking on the phone with your children.

- **Read a Book** – Read books with your children that deal with the subject of using greetings, such as *Say Hello* by Jack & Michael Foreman, *Hello! Goodbye!* by Alike, or *Oh No! Time to Go! A Book of Goodbyes* by Rebecca Doughty.

- **Sing a Song** – Use music as a great motivator to help your children learn social skills. There are many songs available that talk about using greetings. One example is *People Like it When I Say Hi* by Cathy Bollinger.



# PREKINDERGARTEN

*Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I may remember.*  
*Involve me and I will understand.*  
*~Chinese Proverb*



We have introduced each letter of the alphabet. We will continue reinforcing the letters and their sounds, please join us in reviewing them at home. During January we will begin to create a numeral book and introduce numerals 0-10. Our literacy activities will include: learning

and acting out nursery rhymes, listening to and discussing fairy tales and fables and identifying favorite characters in the stories. Please ask your children about the stories we are reading and have them reenact some nursery rhymes for you at home.

Keep reading to your children. Read lots of different kinds of books. Reread their favorite books, children love repetition. Read predictable books. Your children will begin to recognize the repeated words and will like saying them with you. Ask your

children what they think will happen next in the story. Talk about the stories you read. Ask about your children's favorite parts. Help your children relate the story to something in their life.

These fun and simple activities will promote literacy with your children. Story time can be more than simply reading a book.



One hundred days of learning,  
One hundred days of fun,  
One hundred days to work and play,  
Aren't I the lucky one?

# KINDERGARTEN

We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday. Kindergarten is very excited to get back to school to begin using the reading and math skills we have worked on up to this point.

In reading the children are using their letter/sound skills to begin reading and writing on an independent level. You may hear them trying to sound out words while reading stories or trying to use their sounds to write words and stories. Encour-

age them to try as much of this on their own as they can. The more they practice the better and easier their skills will develop. We are focusing on consonant/vowel/consonant words that use the short vowel sounds.

In math we are anxious to get to the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school. We have been counting to 100 by 1's and 10's. Practice counting at home to see how far you can get. We have also begun to explore adding with numbers up

to 10. We use counters (buttons, crayons etc.) to help us. Try a few adding problems at home.

Remember we do go outside every day. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the cold weather.

# FIRST GRADE

In December we were busy singing, decorating and enjoying the excitement this time of year brings. We made colorful star and snowflake ornaments that adorned the Christmas tree in the foyer. Mrs. Courtright and the children worked very hard rehearsing for the Christmas concert. What a wonderful way to begin the holiday season.

Along with all the fun, our first graders have been working very hard. We will continue using Text Talk to improve our student's vocabulary throughout the school year. Remember to discuss the vocabulary words with



your child. Try to use the words at home. This will help them remember the word. Also, you could have them write a sentence or draw a picture for you to illustrate the meaning.

We will begin January by getting back into our normal routine after a long holiday break. Rest up because we have lots of exciting and challenging activities to complete. We will be diving into our reading book and work diligently at becoming more proficient readers every day. The students will be learning about: long vowels, while continuing to review the sneaky silent e words like, "white," blends, digraphs and nouns. The students will use all of these skills to increase their fluency and comprehension.

In social studies, the children will be studying the life of Dr. Martin L. King Jr. and the Presidents. In health class we will be learning about the proper technique for brushing teeth and overall dental hygiene. Our science lessons will address: weather, safety and a unit on solids and liquids. We will continue to work on basic math facts as well as time and money, word problems and shapes. The students will also be tested using the DIBELS assessment during the month of January and their scores will be sent home.

# LEARNING SUPPORT

We hope everyone had a great holiday and a restful vacation. What New Year's Resolutions did you make for 2011?

In January, the students will continue working in the SRA Corrective Reading. The students have been increasing their reading rate and fluency. Parents, keep up the good work reading with your children at home and having them read their stories or passages to you each night.

In the Saxon Math Program, students will be working on: naming fractional parts, measurement, writing dates using numbers, creating symmetrical designs, and addition facts. Their progress will be measured through written and fact assessment.



The day is cloudy and the wind is bold. Dress up warmly, you mustn't get cold!

Put on your coat and zip it up tight, put on your left boot, put on your right.

Put on your scarf and put on your hat, put on your mittens and clap-clap-clap!

Go outside and play and play. Come in again, and then we'll say-

Take off your coat that was zipped up tight, take off your left boot, take off your right. Take off your scarf, take off your hat, take off your mittens, and then take a nap!



## SECOND GRADE

Second grade students will soon be introduced to their second reading anthology entitled, Banner Days. In the first theme, "Imagine That," children learn how imagination and creativity help people solve problems and express ideas. They find that if you have an active imagination, surprises are everywhere!

The focus of our math lessons will shift to counting and identifying mixed coins. We will be counting groups of coins by value; ordering them from greatest to least; then beginning with the largest coin and adding on by 25, tens,

fives, and ones to reach the total. The best way to practice counting coins is by using the real thing. 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.

DIBELS benchmark testing is scheduled this month. Students are expected to read at a rate of 68 correct words per minute. (The spring benchmark goal is 90 cwpm.) You can support your child in attaining this goal by taking the opportunity to foster your child's

interests in a specific collection of books (Eg. Magic Tree House, The Boxcar Children, Amelia Bedelia, Horrible Harry, Flat Stanley and more!) Getting hooked on a series may heighten their interest and in turn, foster a love for reading that will last a lifetime!

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

We hope everyone had a happy and safe holiday! The New Year welcomes many new reading and math strategies. In reading, we have been busy learning about people growing and changing through their relationships with others in theme three of our reading series. Before we know it, we'll be beginning a new reading book titled, On Your Mark.

In math, the students recently studied collecting and organizing data. Students were

able to create a graph of their own. Some may have chosen a bar graph, a line graph, or even a pictograph. Take time to talk to your child about the graph they created in math class. We are now eagerly learning multiplication and division. This is an exciting time for many third grade students. This new skill will be one that they use every day in life, and they are proud to be learning it! Please continue to practice rocket math every night.

During social studies,

students have been learning ways in which they can get involved in their community. Volunteering time to a local organization is a wonderful way to be an active citizen. Students will also be visiting the history of the United States. We will have an opportunity to read about Jamestown and some of the early settlers.

In science class, students continue to work on electricity and magnetism. Students are excited to learn and experiment with circuits.

During health class, our third grade students are continuing to learn about personal hygiene and grooming. Shortly students will be studying the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol and the important lesson in saying "No!"

Thank you again for all that you do. Have a safe and happy New Year!

## FIFTH GRADE

Happy New Year! We hope everyone is well rested because fifth grade will be working hard to prepare for the PSSA tests which will take place in March.

In health, the children will be finishing up the unit on Drug and Alcohol Awareness. This includes: steps to take in the process of saying "no", safe alternatives to drug and alcohol use, plus the effect these substances have on our body and overall well-being. This unit will culminate with a visit by a local State Police Officer who will discuss consequences of the use of drugs

and alcohol. Our next unit will be on the body's Nervous System.

In science, fifth graders will be continuing their exploration of mixtures and solutions. This chemistry unit includes: saturating solutions, identifying mystery substances, and drawing crystal patterns observed with a hand lens. These are a few of the activities to be completed.

Colonization and conflict will be the next unit explored in social studies. Your child will be learning about how the English felt about settling and building new homes in North

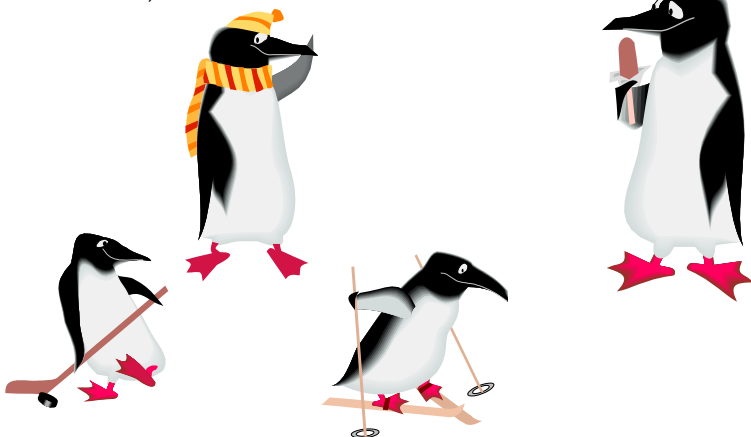
America. Ask your child about how colonial settlements developed along the Atlantic Coast and Appalachian Mountains. We will also be exploring how some colonists peacefully coexisted with the Native Americans while others fought with Native Americans who wanted to protect their way of life.

One royal penguin, feeling very blue, called for his brother then there were two.

Two royal penguins swimming in the sea, called for their sister, then there were three.

Three royal penguins waddle on the shore, called for their mother, then there were four.

Four royal penguins learning how to dive, called for their father, then there were five.



## FOURTH GRADE

As we start 2011, please remember to continue practicing math facts every day. Fourth graders are expected to be finished with multiplication rocket math by the end of the second marking period. Also, fill out reading logs every day.

In science class, students have finished their water unit. An energy unit will be next. Mechanical, sound, electrical, heat, and chemical energy will be the focus.

Students have been talking about the cardiovascular and respiratory systems. Labs have been done to show the effects of alcohol and tobacco. The next unit will be on nutrition.

During social studies class, students have been learning about the colony of Pennsylvania. They learned about William Penn and how new settlements changed the lives of Native Americans.

In reading class, we have been learning about figurative language and affixes. Papers have been sent home for practice. Please work on these with your child.

