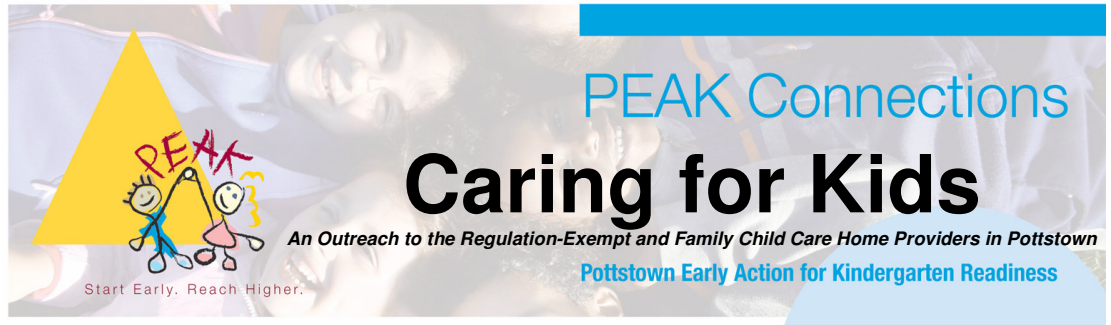
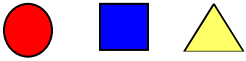


Start Early. Reach Higher.

December 2009

PEAK Caring for Kids
Newsletter



PEAK Professional Development

Remember to register for the December professional development session for regulation-exempt and family child care home providers:

What: Healthy Snacks for the Holidays

When: Wednesday, December 9, 2009

Time: 6:00-7:30

Where: Pottstown Public Library

Mandel Smith with Penn State Extension will present a program on healthy snacks for children and families.

PQAS Credit Awarded (the state required training)

Hands-On Activities

Gift Certificates (\$10.00) for participants

Come join us for some fun and snack ideas for the upcoming holidays!

To register, contact Mary Rieck at 610-970-6655 or mrieck@pottstownsd.org.

Dates to Remember

December 9: Healthy Snacks Professional Development

December 24-January 1: Pottstown School District closed

Remember to register for the professional development opportunity.



DECEMBER CARING FOR KIDS PACKET

The December packet focuses on the upcoming holidays. Cut apart the Christmas dominoes and use them to play dominoes or use them for matching. In case you have not played dominoes in awhile, directions are included.

There is a Christmas tree puzzle. Cut it apart and let your children enjoy putting it together. Holiday cards are great for making puzzles, also. Save your left-over cards and cut apart for more puzzles.

Two recipes for play dough are included in the newsletter. Try out one or both of these spe-

cial recipes during December.

Caring for Kids newsletters are now posted on the PEAK web site at www.peakonline.org. Check the site for more ideas to use at home.

Return the enclosed postcard or contact Mary at mrieck@pottstownsd.org for a free children's book.



Contact Information:

Mary Rieck
PEAK Coordinator
610-970-6655
mrieck@pottstownsd.org

Whitney Leone
Family Specialist
610-326-1610

Kathy Perry
Health Specialist
610-718-8642

Emily Baddeley
Pre-K Coach
610-718-8635

Jeff Sparagana, Ed.D.
Director of Education/
Human Resources
www.peakonline.org

SONGS, POEMS AND FINGERPLAYS



Finger-plays, songs and rhymes are great ways to develop language in young children. Try these!

Where Is Santa

Sung to: "Where is Thumbkin"

Where is Santa? Where is Santa?
Here I am! Here I am!
Merry, Merry Christmas
Merry, Merry Christmas
Ho Ho Ho! Ho Ho Ho!

5 Little Christmas Trees

Five little Christmas trees
Standing all alone
Their hearts were very sad
'Cause they hadn't found a home.
Then chop went the ax
And down fell the tree
And off they went with a happy family!
(continue from 4 to 1 Christmas trees)
No little Christmas trees
Standing all alone
Their hearts were very happy
'Cause they all found a home!

I'm A Little Pine Tree

Sung to: "I'm A Little Teapot"

I'm a little pine tree- as you can see,
All the other pine trees are bigger than

me.
Maybe when I grow up-then I'll be
A great big merry Christmas tree!

Let's All

Sung to: "We Wish You A Merry Christmas"

Let's all do a little clapping,
Let's all do a little clapping,
Let's all do a little clapping,
& spread Christmas cheer.
You can change the clapping to other activities.

- 2.Jumping
- 3.Twirling
- 4.Stretching
- 5.Bending Ask the kids for other ideas.

The Lights on the Tree

Sung to: "The Wheels on the Bus"

The lights on the tree go blink, blink,
blink,
Blink, blink, blink, blink, blink, blink.
The lights on the tree go blink, blink,
blink
All Christmas Day.

Other Verses:

The presents at the house go rattle,
rattle, rattle, etc.
The mom at the house goes bake,
bake, bake, etc.
The dad at the house goes snore,
snore, snore, etc.
The grandma at the house goes hug,
hug, hug, etc.
The grandpa at the house goes kiss,
kiss, kiss, etc.

Christmas Fingerplay

I am a Christmas tree growing up tall,
(stretch)
But when I first started, I was this small
(crouch).
Then I grew bigger and had branches this
wide, (stand slowly, arms out).
And I made pine cones with seeds hiding
inside. (fold hand for pine cone)
The wind shakes my branches, (shake
arms).
And down those seeds fall, (flutter fingers
downward).
To make new little pine trees for tinsel and
balls. (point hands together for tree, open-
ing slowly to form ball shape).

Holiday Activity Ideas



Decoration Match

Cut out tree shapes from construction paper and glue various colored shapes on them randomly. Laminate the trees and extra matching shapes. Have the children place matching shapes on the trees.

Colored Gifts

Gather a collection of small boxes and wrap in solidly colored paper. Cut out a variety of shapes from construction paper in colors to match the boxes. Have the children place the colored shapes in the matching boxes.

Greeting Card Puzzles

Laminate or cover with clear contact paper a variety of seasonal greeting cards. Cut the cards into three or four puzzle pieces. Have the children put the puzzles

together. Younger children may need background paper to use in fitting the cards together.

Sorting Real Objects

Gather a variety of small objects representing the holiday season (little trees, mice, drums, horns, animals—check a craft store for ideas). Store the objects in a box. Have the children pour out all the objects and sort them by categories. After they have sorted the objects, have them line each category up in rows. Which category has the most objects? Which has the fewest objects?

Pine Branch Painting

Collect short pine boughs to use as painting tools. The tools can be placed at the easel or used with a shallow pan of tempera paint at the tables.

Magnetic Painting

Place a cookie sheet on two stacks of blocks about 4" tall. Place a piece of paper on the cookie sheet. The child will put several metal washers in red and green tempera paint and transfer them to the cookie sheet using the spoon. Press a magnet on the bottom of the cookie sheet. By moving the magnet, the student will move the washer along the paper and make designs.

Feely Box

Create a feely box containing Christmas items such as bows, cookie cutters, wrapping paper, non-breakable ornaments, stockings, bells, candles, and enjoy.

Fun Playdough for December



Gingerbread Play-Dough

1 cup flour
1/2 cup salt
2 tsp. cream of tartar
1 cup water
1 tsp. vegetable oil
Spices--Cinnamon, Allspice, Ginger, Nutmeg
*Green and Red food coloring to make Brown (optional--the spices usually give the dough a good brown color.)

Mix the dry ingredients. Experiment with the spices until you get a scent and color that you like. Mix water and oil together first and then add them to the dry ingredients and stir.

In a pot, cook the mixture for three to five minutes on low/medium, stirring constantly. The dough will start to pull away from the sides of the pot and stick together in a large ball. Take it out of the pan when you see a VERY faint brown skin on the dough one each side.

Take the dough out of the pan and knead the dough until it becomes soft and smooth. Allow the dough to cool and then store it in an airtight container.

Total time to make dough: 10 minutes.

Sparkly Peppermint Playdough

2 cups water
2 cups flour
1 cup salt
4 teaspoons cream of tartar
4 tablespoons oil
4 tablespoons peppermint extract
glitter

Mix all ingredients in a heavy saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until mixture thickens and pulls away from the sides of the pan.

Form dough into a ball, sprinkle with glitter, place on waxed paper, and cool completely. Store in Ziplock bags.



Parents as Partners



Help parents beat the “what did you do today?” blues – encourage them to ask their children open-ended questions! Fill parents in on an event coming up or something special their child did that day, however brief. It is important that parents stay informed of the day-to-day activities of the program. This way, they are better equipped to communicate. You may also need to model using open-ended questions in front of parents – this may be a new strategy for them. A simple, “Tell me about your special stuffed animal, Johnny” at drop off may motivate a parent when they see how their child opens up to respond.

(Adapted from Family-Friendly Communication for Early Childhood Programs)

Snowman Soup

Assemble in a gift bag or small zipper food storage bag:

1 individual pack hot chocolate mix
3 chocolate kisses
10-15 mini-marshmallows
1 small candy cane (for stirring)

Make a gift tag with the following poem:

Was told you've been real good this year.

Always glad to hear it!
With freezing weather drawing near,
You'll need to warm the spirit.
So here's a little Snowman Soup
Complete with stirring stick.
Add hot water, sip it slow.
It's sure to do the trick!

Cinnamon Ornaments

1 tablespoon ground cloves
2 tablespoons water
3 tablespoons white glue
3/4 cup applesauce
1 cup cinnamon (buy in bulk at a spice or health food store)

Mix all ingredients together until dough has a clay-like consistency (add one or two more tablespoons of water if it is too dry). Next, dust a work surface with cinnamon and roll out the dough to 1/4 inch thick. Have children cut out ornaments using holiday cookie cutters. Help children poke a hole in each ornament with a straw, then let ornaments dry on baking racks. String with ribbon. Makes approximately four dozen two-inch ornaments.

Community Resource

Pennsylvania Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Screen or apply at www.compass.state.pa.us – or call 1-866-857-7095 to request an application

- Helps low-income families pay their heating bills
- Cash grants – typically sent directly to utility company in one sum (per year)
- Crisis grants – help households who are in immediate danger of losing heat – contact local county assistance office

Recipes of the Month



Party Snack Basket

3 Tablespoon margarine
1 Tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1/8 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 tsp. onion powder
3 cups small pretzel sticks
3 cups Corn Chex
3 cups Rice Chex

Melt margarine and Worcestershire sauce. Add onion and garlic powders. In separate large bowl, mix together pretzels and cereals, then add melted margarine mixture. Stir well and divide into two 10"x15" baking pans.

Bake at 325 degrees for 20 minutes, stirring twice. Pour out onto paper towels to absorb the fat. Store in airtight containers when cooled.

Yield: 18 servings
Calories: 81 per 1/2 cup serving
Carbohydrates: 14 g
Fat: 2 g



Tortilla Roll-Ups

Four, 10 inch flour tortillas
2 tablespoons low-fat salad dressing or mayonnaise
1/2 cup chunky salsa
4 ounces sliced smoked turkey or roast beef
1/2 cup shredded low-fat cheddar cheese
1/2 cup thin strips red pepper
1/4 cup sliced green onions
2 tablespoons sliced black olives

Spread salad dressing on tortilla; spread salsa over salad dressing. Top with meat, cheese and vegetables as desired. Roll up and serve or heat 1 minute in microwave on medium power.

Wrap each tortilla in plastic wrap after rolling and then refrigerated. Cut into 1-inch slices for bite-sized snacks.

Yield: 8 Tortilla Roll-Ups.

Each serving provides approximately: 158 calories, 8 g protein, 23 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, 4 g fat (1 g saturated), 8 mg cholesterol,

December Resource Packet

The *December Caring for Kids Resource Packet* includes:

- Newsletter
- Christmas Tree Puzzle
- Christmas Dominoes
- December Fingerplays and Songs

Need more information or resources? Call PEAK at 610-970-6655 or visit the PEAK web site at www.peakonline.org

PEAK Caring for Kids Outreach Collaborating Partners

- Pottstown School District
- Montgomery County Child Care Information Services
- Montgomery County Child Care Consortium
- Penn State Extension
- Pottstown Family Center
- Pottstown Public Library
- Pottstown Rotary Club
- United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania
- YWCA Family Literacy Center



PEAK Caring for Kids Connections: Creating a professional learning community for the regulation-exempt and family child providers in Pottstown to share ideas, improve instructional practices and implement best practices in the delivery of quality early learning experiences



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