



## Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness

Mission: Every child in Pottstown will enter Kindergarten ready to learn and achieve



# PEAK Classroom Connections

*PEAK Classroom Connections: Creating a professional learning community for the early learning teachers in Pottstown to share ideas, improve instructional practices and implement researched-based best practices in the delivery of quality early learning experiences*



## PEAK Updates

### Upcoming Professional Development

2/25/08- Challenging Behaviors, 9:30 AM-12:30- Administration Building

3/25/08- The Power of Documentation traveling exhibit at Gratz college  
([www.chicagometroaeyc.org](http://www.chicagometroaeyc.org))

### Congratulations Christine!

Christine Dise of the YMCA is a recipient of the 2008 Terri Lynne Lokoff National Child Care Teacher Awards. The award ceremony will take place on Wednesday April, 9, 2008 at the King of Prussia Mall. We look forward to cheering on Pottstown's own star!

Visit [www.tllccf.org](http://www.tllccf.org) for more information.



February 2008

### DROP PEAK A LINE

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## Continuing Education

As the state begins moving in the direction of requiring an increased amount of staff at each site to be credentialed, PEAK is looking at other opportunities to assist those interested in continuing their education.

- Eastern University is working with PEAK to start a BA degree in ECE for those that have already attained their AA. The cohort will be offered in Pottstown one night a week. If you are interested contact your director or Emily Baddeley.
- We are currently assessing the need for a 2nd CDA cohort in Pottstown for the Fall of 2008. If you are interested please let your director or Emily Baddeley know.
- DVAEYC continues to provide career counseling one on one to staff at our PreK Counts I Pottstown centers. If you are interested in career counseling but do not have access to the program with DVAEYC both your director or Emily Baddeley can assist you.

# Finger Plays

Finger plays should be an integral part of every Early Childhood classroom's day. Not only do children love to do them over and over but they are helping to teach them a number of valuable skills. Remember, while technology and computers may seem like an important part of your day do not overlook the simple things you can give your children.

- Television is passive and computers only activate a small portion of the brain. When children engage in finger play you can almost see the synapses in your children's brains fire as they try to model the motions and chant along.
- Besides the personal satisfaction that comes from using these finger plays, they clearly relate to many early childhood skills and state standards.

Here are just a few benefits of using finger plays daily with children:

## Language Skills

Oral language  
Auditory memory  
Phonological awareness  
(alliteration, rhythm, rhyme)

Fluency  
Comprehension  
Vocabulary

## Math Concepts

Number  
Size  
Pattern

## Motor Skills

Eye-hand coordination  
Small muscle development

## Social Skills

Cooperation  
Following directions

- Choose one new finger play each week to introduce in your classroom. Write it on a poster or large tablet
- Make a copy and glue it on an index card. Punch a hole and save on a book ring and soon you'll have a "ring of rhymes."
- Send home copies of finger plays so parents can enjoy them with their children.
- Practice saying the rhyme to yourself so it will be familiar when you teach it to your students. Let your eyes, facial expression, body language, and enthusiasm capture your children's interest.

Have fun with them and your children will too

## Try These



### FIVE LITTLE CUPCAKES

Down around the corner  
At the bakery shop, *(Hold up 5 fingers and wiggle.)*  
Five little cupcakes  
With sprinkles on top.  
Along came *(child's name)*  
With a penny one day.  
She bought a cupcake and  
She took it away. *(Put down 1 finger.)*  
Four...three...two...one

### BUBBLEGUM

Bubblegum, *(Pat thighs to the beat.)*  
Bubblegum  
In a dish.  
How many pieces  
Do you wish?  
1, 2, 3, 4, 5,  
6, 7, 8, 9, 10..... *(Clap and count.)*  
\*(Let different children chose an amount and clap)



### I HAVE A CAT

I have a cat. *(Make "cat" in sign language by stroking whiskers.)*  
I have a cat. *(Children repeat.)*  
My cat is fat. *(Hold out arms in front of you like a tummy.)*  
My cat is fat. *(Children repeat.)*  
My cat wears a hat. *(Pretend to put a hat on your head.)*  
My cat wears a hat. *(Children repeat.)*  
My cat sees a bat. *(Link thumbs and pretend to fly hands.)*  
My cat sees a bat. *(Children repeat.)*  
My cat sees a rat. *(Hold up pinky like a rat's tail.)*  
My cat sees a rat. *(Children repeat.)*  
I have a cat. *(Pretend to stroke whiskers.)*  
I have a cat. *(Children repeat.)*  
MEOW! *(Make hands like claws and say together.)*  
\*\*\* this is a great finger play for helping children hear rhyme\*\*\*



# Happy Valentine's Day



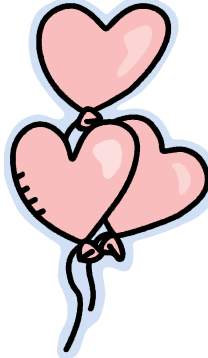
**Chocolate Play Dough** - Make play dough using your favorite recipe. Omit the food coloring and let the children knead the dough in cocoa. It will look and smell like chocolate. Purchase a box of valentine candies and remove/eat the candies. Children can roll up the dough and put them in the paper containers.

**Conversation Hearts** - Conversation hearts are good to sort, count, read, and eat! Estimate how many will be in a bag, then count. Graph the ones that are the same. Make a game by cutting paper hearts out of construction paper. Write like phrases found on candy hearts (such as "Kiss Me, "Cool One," "WOW!" "Cutie Pie") on two of the hearts. Children can visually match up the ones that go together, or they can play a concentration game with them.

**Predictable Books** - Have children make blank books using one of these titles: Love is... I love... Happiness is... A friend is... My favorite things to love... Things I love from A to Z.

**Activities:** Here's a valentine puzzle your children will

love! Cut red paper into 4" squares. Cut 4" red circles out as well. Cut the circles in half. Give each child a square and 2 semi-circles and challenge them to turn their shapes into a heart. After they have played with the shapes for a few minutes, demonstrate how to solve the puzzle.



**Valentine's Snack:** Here's a simple "Valentine" snack. You will need small cups, spoons, applesauce, and cinnamon candies. Give each child a cup and fill it 2/3 full with applesauce. Take a bite. How does it taste? Let each child count out 8 cinnamon candies and place them in the cup. Tell them to stir, stir, stir! What happens to the applesauce? What happens to the candies? How does the applesauce taste now?

Make sure to add cards, stickers and other valentine writing props to your writing center. Children can make and send their valentines all month long. Words for the word wall might include: love, like, hug, heart.

## Expanding Literacy Props in the Classroom

Dramatic Play is the most logical area to add many literacy opportunities for children. There should be many print rich literacy props in your dramatic play area for children to explore and interact with. Don't forget, as the teacher, to help guide their learning and give ideas and suggestions.

Role of the teacher:

- Observe and record children's progress through the writing stages
- Observe children's interests and tailor writing and literacy experiences to reflect interests

- Support children within their literacy development by providing lots of rich experiences to interact with print
- Schedules
- Signs ( do not enter, no smoking, etc.)
- Weather maps
- Appointment cards
- Time cards
- Price tagging materials
- Receipts
- Catalogs for placing orders
- Address books

Examples of props to include:

- Checks
- Greeting cards
- Lists
- Lottery tickets
- Cookbooks
- Coupons
- Directions

## Fast Food Shockers

PEAK  
Teacher Newsletter

Take this quiz to test your knowledge of fast food.

- Which has the fewest calories?  
A. Big Mac  
B. Grilled chicken club  
C. 20 McNuggets  
D. Large fries
- Which has the most calories?  
A. Corn muffin  
B. Glazed donut  
C. French toastix  
D. Egg McMuffin
- A Wendy's chicken BLT salad without dressing has how many calories?  
A. 140  
B. 240  
C. 340  
D. 440
- How many calories in a packet of Wendy's honey mustard dressing?  
A. 80  
B. 180  
C. 280  
D. 380
- Which Subway sub is healthiest?  
A. Meatball  
B. Steak and cheese  
C. Tuna  
D. Ham
- A Whopper with cheese has how many fat grams?  
A. 17  
B. 27  
C. 37  
D. 47
- Which size Burger King fries has 360 calories?  
A. small  
B. medium  
C. Large  
D. king
- How many calories in a packet of ketchup?  
A. 0  
B. 15  
C. 30  
D. 50
- Which pizza topping adds the most calories?  
A. Onion  
B. Sausage  
C. Green pepper  
D. Mushroom
- Which Taco Bell item has the most calories?  
A. Taco salad  
B. Soft taco  
C. Gordita  
D. Chalupa

While you may not always make the best choices at the drive thru, it's never too late to recognize your weaknesses and take small steps toward healthier eating habits.

Answers:  
1. A 540 calories; 2. A 500 calories; 3. C 340 calories;  
4. C opt for fat-free Ranch instead; 5. D 290 calories;  
6. D Hold the cheese to save 8 fat grams; 7. B A small is  
130 calories less; 8. B Beware, condiment calories add  
up; 9. B; 10. A

## Pottstown Public Library

Don't forget you can always visit Mr. Mike at the Pottstown library. He will help you pick out stories appropriate for a classroom theme, help find stories that are relevant to classroom concerns and help you address social/emotional concerns with children. He will also have the inside track on new books and great new authors. Check it out, and encourage your families to do the same. You can also stop by and check out the library's mural behind the building.

Here is the 2008 storytime schedule:

**Open stories-** Monday @10:30 AM

**Infant/Toddler Storytime** - Thursdays at 10:30 or 11:15

**Family Place Parent/Child Workshop** for parents and caregivers with children birth to three. This series of 5 workshops will begin on February 13th and meet on every Wednesday through March 12. Registration is required.

Some websites to check out:

[www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org)- lots of information for teachers and parents about children of all ages

[www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org)- for the regions training opportunities and info about Keystone STARS

[www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org)- National institute for early education research

[www.peakonline.org](http://www.peakonline.org)

[www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)- National Education Association, information about Read Across America

[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)- National Association for the Education of Young Children has lots of good resources

[www.pacca.org](http://www.pacca.org)- PA's child care association- information about T.E.A.C.H.