



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

An Educator's New Year's Resolution



January 2009

Make a child's success your personal mission: When a teacher makes a personal investment in a child it shows. The student and parents (in many cases) can tell that you are willing to give your all to that child and in turn, will do their best to meet you at the half waypoint. This isn't always an easy journey, but it is always a rewarding one.

Lead by example: The 'do what I say and not what I do' approach does not work for kids. If you want them to read, they have to see you reading. If you want them to be fair with each other, you have to be fair with them. If you want them to be disciplined and organized, they must also see these qualities in you. In addition, you can best teach qualities that you already embody yourself.

Smile more: A happy teacher is a happy classroom. Smile more and it will become infectious. This will make teaching and learning much easier.

Be more creative: Find new and creative ways to teach lessons. Teach songs, draw pictures, do experiments, play games.

Take time for personal fun and adventure: Don't forget to take care of yourself. You need to recharge your personal batteries in order to have anything to give to those who you teach

by Andrea Hermitt, [Education Examiner](#)

What is your 2009 Professional Resolution ?



Contact Information:

Mary Rieck

PEAK Coordinator
610-970-6655
mriECK@pottstownsd.org

Emily Baddeley

PEAK Pre-K Coach
610-718-8635
ebaddele@pottstownsd.org

Kathy Perry

PEAK Health Consultant
610-718-8642
klperry@pottstownsd.org

Whitney Tyng

Family Engagement Specialist
610-326-1610
wtyng@fsmontco.org

PEAK Web Site
www.peakonline.org



Parents as Partners

What did you do at school today?

Keep parents aware of what is happening in your classroom, and encourage them to ask their children specific questions (we all know the most common answer to the age-old expression is, "nothing"). Offer parents conversation starters at pick-up, such as "Ask Sally what rabbits eat", or "Ask Billy about the block castle he built this afternoon". It is hard spending an entire day away from your child, and this will help parents feel more connected to what is happening in the classroom.



Problems with attendance? Do your families need assistance with referrals or resources?

Remember to call Whitney Tyng, PEAK Family Engagement Specialist, at 610-326-1610.

For other resources for families visit the PEAK website at www.peakonline.org

Remember:

Keep track of your family's involvement in your room in the PEAK notebook.

Family Take-Home Activity Bags

Would you like to create more take-home activity bags for your families? Contact Mary or Whitney for more tote bags.

Community Helpers Songs and Fingerplays

The People in Your Neighborhood

A song from Sesame Street

Oh, who are the people in your neighborhood
In your neighborhood
In your neighborhood.
Oh, who are the people in your neighborhood,
The people that you meet each day.
Oh, the fireman is a person in your neighborhood,
In your neighborhood, in your neighborhood.
The fireman is a person in your neighborhood,
A person that you meet each day.
Add verses with other people in the neighborhood; grocer, mail carrier, etc.

A Fireman

A fingerplay

This brave fireman is going to bed
hold up right thumb
Down on the pillow he lays his head
right thumb on left palm
Wraps himself in his blanket tight
curl fingers around thumb
And plans to sleep this way all night
close eyes
But the fire alarm rings! He opens his eyes!
open eyes
Quickly he's dressed and down the pole he slides
right hand slides down left arm in a grip from elbow to wrist
Then he climbs on the truck to go, go, go.
hands manipulate imaginary steering wheel

Indoor Games- When weather doesn't permit outside activity

Detective

One child is the "detective." The detective describes a "missing child" (classmate), giving their eye color, hair color, description of clothing, likes, etc. The first person to identify the missing child gets to be the new detective.

Hint! Here is another variation of this game. Send the detective out in the hall. Select one child and hide him or her under your desk or behind a shelf. The detective returns to the classroom and tries to identify the missing child. (You can also let two children exchange seats and see if the detective can spot the switch.)

Tower Topple

Every child will need one block from the block center for this game. The first child places their block on the floor. The second child places his or her block on top of the first block. The game continues as each child adds their block to the tower. When the "tower topples," children get a block and the game begins all over again.

Hint! Have children count the blocks and see if they can beat their previous record.

Paper Plate Party

Give each child 2 paper plates. Put on some music and:

- Clap the plates like cymbals.
- Shuffle them to the beat.
- Tap on the hips, shoulders, and other body parts.
- Clap high, low, in front of you, behind.
- * Play "follow the leader" as children take turns doing something with their plates as peers follow along.
 - Place on the floor. Put one foot on each plate and skate around the room.
 - Skate backwards. Skate on one foot. Skate with a friend.

Imaginary Pet Parade

Cut string or yarn into 18"-24" pieces. Pass a string out to each child. Have children hold the string with one hand and drag the other end on the floor. Explain that on the end of their string they have an imaginary pet. Ask children, "What is your pet? What is it's name? What does it eat? What do you and your pet like to do together?"

Kindergarten Transition

If you have children in your classroom who will be going to Kindergarten next year, it's not too early to begin to think about activities that you can participate in, in order to make the transition as smooth as possible for both them and their families.

If you haven't contacted your partner school yet then you should go ahead and do that this month. If you aren't sure who your partner school is or if you have one, contact your director. If you are having difficulty contacting them or getting a response contact Emily Baddeley (contact information is available on

the front of this newsletter).

Some books for children about Kindergarten Transition:

Countdown to Kindergarten, by Alison McGhee

Elizabeth's School, by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen

If You Take a Mouse to School, by Laura Numeroff

Mama, Don't Go!, by Rosemary Wells

Tiptoe Into Kindergarten, by Jacqueline Rogers

A full list of books is available online at:

<http://eccares.uoregon.edu/pdfs/Kindergarten%20Transition/English/KindergartenBooks.pdf>

Question of the Day

One fun and meaningful way to incorporate literacy, name recognition, math, social skills, language is through the use of a Question of the Day. To introduce this neat, daily or weekly activity begin with either a pocket chart or poster board. You will need each child's name, laminated, which can be either used with Velcro on the poster board or placed in the pocket chart.

Begin by explaining the Question of the Day activity in Circle Time. You will need to help children to understand that they need to "read" the question and then vote on their answer. In the beginning it is best to start with two choices and model the voting in circle as a whole group.

Once children become more familiar with the activity the teacher can put the question out in before children arrive and the children can make their choice for an answer as they come into the classroom. This is a good place for a teacher to sit as children arrive to help them read the question as well as assist with the children's transition into the classroom.

At circle time the teacher can count and record the number of children who chose each answer and allow some discussion on why they chose specific answers.



This activity is intended to enhance learning in the classroom, and can be as creative for the children as they want to make it. It is very validating to allow them to pick their own answers. This is one of "there are no wrong answers" activities. For example if the question is "How did you come to school today?" Car, Bus, Walk, Plane and one child answers plane that's ok. They have their reasons, maybe they were pretending their car was a plane, maybe that was the only way mom could get them into their car seats! Keep in mind the intent of the activity which is to encourage language, literacy, math skills *not* literal thinking.

Some examples of questions you might use:

It might be easier to start out with yes/no questions :

- Do you like apples (or whatever snack is)?
- Do you have a pet?
- Have you ever been on a plane (or bus, or train)?

Then move to questions with more choices:

- What juice do you like better?
- Apple/Orange/Grape

Which would you rather be?

Fireman/Policeman/Teacher

Extension Idea: After children are fully comfortable with the Question of the Day you can have them create the questions for the children to answer the next day.