

PEAK Classroom Connections

PEAK 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 News and Reminders

Directors' Meeting

Directors will meet on March 9 at the Administration Building at 1:00

Pre-K Counts Teacher Meeting

Pre-K Counts teachers will meet on March 9 at 4:00 at the Administration Building.

Music and Movement Professional Development

Linking Music and Dance to the Curriculum: The use of music to help target motor planning, balance, go/stop, rhythm mastery and the link to higher cognitive skills. Karen DeHaven will return to Pottstown to lead a second professional development session on the importance of movement to young children. Watch for information on registering for the session. The session will be held on April 20 from 5:30-7:30 at the Administration Building.

Family Literacy Nights

The Pottstown School District Family Literacy Nights are being held monthly at Pottstown Middle School. Each month focuses on a different aspect of early literacy. Parents receive instruction and modeling from kindergarten teachers. Pre-K children are involved in a variety of activities. The evenings are for all Pottstown families with three, four and five year old children. Please encourage your families to attend the evening sessions. If you want to help with the sessions, contact Mary Rieck.

Upcoming Family Literacy Nights

March 3, April 7, May 5, May 26

6:00-7:30

Pottstown Middle School

Pottstown Family Fest

Pottstown Family Fest will be held at Pottstown Middle School on March 17 from 5:00-7:00. Lots of fun activities and resources are provided to families.

My Hands are not for Hurting

Janine Kelly from Montgomery County Women's Center will visit sites in April to present the *My Hands are Not for Hurting* program. Everyone enjoyed Janine's visits last year. Kathy will provide more information on the dates for the various sites.

Lead Screenings

Montgomery County Health Department will provide lead screenings in May. Kathy will contact the sites with more information.



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www.peakonline.org

Spring Finger Plays and Rhymes—Early Learning Standard: Literacy

Standard 1.1.5 Learning to Read Independently/Fluency

Good-Bye Winter

Good-bye winter, we wish you'd go away.
Good-bye snow, good-bye slush.
Good-bye puddles, good-bye snowsuits.
Good-bye cold wind!

Come back springtime, we wish you'd
come to stay.
Come back grass! Come back flowers!
Come back birds! Come back swimsuits.
Come back warm sun!

It is Spring

It is spring, it is spring
The grass is turning green,
The grass is turning green.
Look at all the flowers,
Look at all the flowers.
Hear the birds sing,
Hear the birds sing.

It is Springtime

(Tune: London Bridges)

Leaves are growing on the trees, on the
trees, on the trees.
Leaves are growing on the trees, it is
springtime.

All the grass is turning green....

See the birds build their nests...

Watch the flowers start to grow...

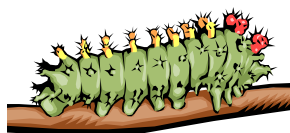
Oh, I Wish I Were a Little Leprechaun

(Tune: If You're Happy and You Know It)

Oh, I wish I were a little leprechaun!
Oh, I wish I were a little leprechaun!
I'd dance around all day, get in every-
body's way.
Oh, I wish I were a little leprechaun.

Oh, I wish I were a little leprechaun!
Oh, I wish I were a little leprechaun!
I'd play hide and seek with you; have lots
of fun that's true.
Oh, I wish I were a little leprechaun!
Oh, I wish I were a little leprechaun!
Oh, I wish I were a little leprechaun!
I'd each chocolate candy; and rub my little
tummy.
Oh, I wish I were a little leprechaun!

Oh, I wish I were a little leprechaun!
Oh, I wish I were a little leprechaun!
I'd make your wish come try, and run away
from you.
Oh, I wish I were a little leprechaun!



Spring Song

Frogs croak
Rains soak
Chicks peep
Crickets leap
Bees hum
Robins come
Birds sing
It's spring!

Fuzzy Caterpillar

Fuzzy caterpillar,
(wiggle both index fingers)
Wiggled up a tree.
(wiggle them up in the air)
He wiggled long, wiggled short, then wig-
gled right at me.
(wiggle fingers with arms outstretched
and then close to face)
Hi there!
(wave hello)
I put him in a box.
(clap hands together)
Don't go away I said.
(shake finger as if scolding)
But when I opened up the box,
(open hands slowly)
There was a butterfly instead!
(cross hands at wrists and "flutter"
hands)

PEAK Mini-Grant Winners

Congratulations to the PEAK Classroom Quality Mini-Grants for 2009! Eleven community teachers will receive \$500 to implement their proposed projects.

Mini-grant winners are:

Lisa Nesbitt: Pottstown YMCA
Tasha Walker: Montgomery County Head Start
Angela Lenker: Montgomery Early Learning Centers
Jamie Roshon: KinderCare Learning Center
Barbara Ward: KinderCare Learning Center
Carolyn Coyle: KinderCare Learning Center
Azelin Zangrilli: KinderCare Learning Center
Linda Vocu: Montgomery County Head Start

Christine Dise: Pottstown YMCA
Jennifer Ellis: Warwick Child Care Center
Meredith Gaskins: Montgomery County Head Start

Congratulations to the teachers and thank you for your commitment to quality early learning. Watch for information on 2010 PEAK Classroom Quality Mini-Grants in the fall.

Remember to check the PEAK web site for re-sources and the online calendar.
www.peakonline.org

Letter Recognition and Knowledge

What's Missing

- Collect three or four items from around the classroom, such as a block, crayon, book and doll. As a variation, use flannel board cutouts.
- Arrange the items in a specific order.
- Ask the children to close their eyes.
- Change the order of the items.
- Ask one child to put the items back in the original order.
- This activity sharpens children's ability to pay attention to detail—a necessary skill when learning the differences in letter shapes.

Thumbprint Letters

- Print several alphabet letters on a 4"x6" index cards, one letter per card.
- Provide a stamp pad.
- Invite the children to press their thumbs on the ink pad and then make fingerprints on top of the lines of the letters on the cards.

Letter Matching

- Write several letters on index cards.
- Give children magnetic letters.
- Ask them to place each magnetic letter on top of the matching letter written on the index cards.
- Write a word on chart paper and encourage the children to copy it using magnetic letters.

Lucky Letters

- Write a different alphabet letter on large cards. Make a matching set of smaller cards.
- Place the 26 cards on the floor in a circle, alphabetically

or randomly.

- Play music and have the children walk around the circle of cards.
- When the music stops, each child picks up of the letter card closest to him.
- Hold up one of the small alphabet cards. The child who is holding the large letter that matches the small letter you are holding identified the letter.
- Continue the game until the children tire of it.

Tablecloth Lotto

- Tape butcher paper to a table and print the alphabet on it.
- Make a set of matching alphabet index cards by writing a letter of the alphabet on separate 4"x6" index cards.
- Challenge the children to match the cards to the letters on the tablecloth.

E-I-E-I-O

- Sing "Old MacDonald had a Farm."
- Write the letters "E," "I," and "O," on a piece of chart paper. Point to the letters as you sing them.
- Sing the song again, changing the letters to three other letters. How does it sound?

Scrabble Letters

- Provide Scrabble letters and encourage the children to find the letters that spell their name.
- As children become familiar with other sight words, they can use the letters to spell those words as well.

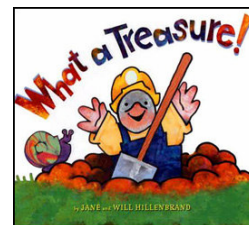


Month of the Young Child

Pottstown will celebrate April as the Month of the Young Child. The community-wide event is scheduled for April 11 from 2:00-4:00 at the Pottstown YMCA. Reading Screwball will return along with the petting zoo, Pipper the Clown, moon bounce, and lots of activities. Please plan to participate in the community event and encourage your families to attend.

In addition to the community event, the Month of the Young Child will be used to highlight the importance of early education. Sites will be encouraged to invite special "readers" and other guests to the classrooms. Outreach to the legislators is especially important as we begin advocating for the continued funding of the state early childhood initiatives.

This year the featured book for the One Book Campaign is *What a Treasure!* by Will and Jane Willenbrand. Through a donation from the Pottstown Rotary Community Endowment Fund, PEAK will purchase copies of the book for all of the children in PEAK partner classrooms.



Let Mary or Emily know about special activities at your site during April.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar's 40th Anniversary Celebration!

This year marks the 40th anniversary of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, which was published in 1969. On March 20th, "The Very Hungry Caterpillar Day," schools, libraries and bookstores will be hosting events and activities to mark this special occasion. Additional celebrations and activities based on this much-loved book will be held throughout the year in schools and libraries and by readers and friends all around the world.



Kindergarten Transition

It is time to start planning kindergarten transition activities. Community teachers will be paired with kindergarten teachers to create simple transition plans. As you are thinking about transition, you want to build connections between:

- Children and the school
- Schools and the school
- Families and the school
- Community and the school

Contact Mary or Emily for transition resources or visit the Terrific Transitions web site at: www.terrifictransitions.org

Multiple Intelligences — *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*

Oral Language

Talk with the children about the meaning of *metamorphosis*. Have them act out the following "Metamorphosis" rhyme.

Metamorphosis

I am an egg. (curl up in fetal position)

I'm an egg.

I'm an egg, egg, egg!

I'm a worm. (open up and wiggle on the ground)

I'm a wiggly, humpty worm!

I'm a cocoon. (curl up in a fetal position with hands over the face)

I'm a cocoon.

I'm a round and silky cocoon!

I'm a butterfly. (stand and fly around using arms for wings)

I'm a butterfly.

I'm a grand and glorious butterfly.

Book Knowledge and Appreciation

Point out how the story follows a predictable sequence using the days of the week as its structure.

Comprehension

Ask the children the following questions: *Which parts of the story could really happen? Which parts are made up? Why did the caterpillar finally stop eating?*

Linguistic, Spatial, Intrapersonal

Invite children to pick their favorite foods from the items the caterpillar ate. Have them draw pictures of their favorite foods, and then dictate a sentence explaining why they like those items.

Logical-Mathematical, Naturalist

Provide a variety of photos of foods, some healthy and some unhealthy. Invite the children to sort the pictures into two categories (healthy and unhealthy). As children work, point out which foods make up a balanced diet and in which food groups they belong.

Bodily-Kinesthetic, Intrapersonal

Play classical music, give the children colorful crepe paper streamers attached to plastic plates, and suggest that they dance like butterflies. Before they start, ask them to close their eyes and imagine the ways butterflies move. Visualizing butterfly movements will help the children move more creatively.

Linguistic, Spatial, Interpersonal

Away from the children, spray paint 26 paper plates green. Write one letter of the alphabet on each plate. Paint another paper plate red, glue large wiggle eyes on it, and attach pipe cleaner antennae to it. Invite the children to put the caterpillar together, starting with its red head and place the green plates in alphabetical order.

Logical-Mathematical, Naturalist

Explain to the children that a typical caterpillar is about the same size as a large paper clip. Give the children paper clips and invite them to find things in the room the same size as a caterpillar.

More ideas for The Very Hungry Caterpillar — visit Eric Carle's web site at:
<http://www.eric-carle.com>