



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 News

PEAK Web Site

The PEAK web site is now available with resources for teachers, families and other community members. Visit the PEAK site at www.peakonline.org.

Be sure to check the teacher section for classroom resources and information on professional development opportunities in Pottstown.

Check the web site frequently as new resources are added regularly.

PEAK Pre-K Coach

Emily Baddeley has joined PEAK as the PEAK Pre-K Coach. Prior to joining Pottstown School District and the PEAK initiative, Emily worked in Delaware County as the Keystone STARS Specialist. Emily also has classroom teaching experience with the Penn Children's Center. Emily's background provides valuable hand-on technical assistance in quality improvement for the PEAK classrooms.

Emily can be contacted at 610- 718-8635 or ebaddele@mciu.org. Do not hesitate to call Emily with questions or requests for assistance.

May 2007

Special points of interest:

- ☺ PEAK News
- ☺ Professional Development
- ☺ Finger Plays and Rhymes
- ☺ Math Ideas
- ☺ Kindergarten Readiness Ideas
- ☺ Eric Carle

Professional Development Opportunities



Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards

This is a three-part professional development series designed to help staff understand the Pennsylvania Pre-K Early Learning Standards and how they can be used in the classroom. In the first week the participants will explore the ELS. The second week will focus on using the standards in the classroom to inform daily planning, documentation of children's learning and establishing a curriculum. The final week will focus on documenting and assessing children's learning using the ELS. Participants in this training need to attend all three parts. This training is for all staff in Pre-K classrooms.

Educators' Night Out

A follow-up Educators' Night Out for Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers will be held on May 17 from 6:00-8:00 at the Pottstown High School. This will be an opportunity to discuss the cross-classroom visits between Pre-K and Kindergarten and to begin initial transition planning for 2007-2008.

Summer Kindergarten Transition Planning

Contact Mary Rieck if you are interested in participating on the PEAK Kindergarten Transition Committee. The committee will meet during the summer to plan kindergarten transition activities for 2007-2008.

Contact Information:

Mary Rieck
PEAK Coordinator
610-970-6655

Emily Baddeley
PEAK Pre-K Coach
610-718-8635

May Finger Plays and Rhymes—PA ELS Literacy

Develop an understanding of the sounds of language (phonological awareness)

A Little Garden Flower

A little garden flower
Is growing in its bed.
(Make a fist with left hand.)
A warm spring sun
Is shining overhead.
(Form circle with right thumb and finger.)
Down come the raindrops,
Dancing to and fro.
(Flutter right fingers downward.)
The little flower awakens
And starts to grow.
*(Slowly extend pointer
finger up from left fist.)*



I'm a Little Ladybug

I'm a little ladybug on the go,
(Fly finger around.)
Landing on an arm, then an elbow.
(Touch arm, then elbow with finger.)
See me fly around and around your hand,
(Circle hand with finger.)
Then watch as on your thumb I land.
(Rest finger on thumb.)



Pretty Butterfly

Here comes a butterfly and lays an egg,
(Fly fingers onto opposite palm.)
Out comes a caterpillar with many legs.
(Crawl fingers on palm.)
Now see the caterpillar spin and spin
(Circle fingers on palm)
A little chrysalis to sleep in.
(Close fingers and rest hand on palm.)
Then from the chrysalis, my oh my,
(Open fingers slowly.)
Out comes a beautiful butterfly!
(Fly fingers away.)



The Path to Math: Beginning Numbers

Children ages 3-5 are learning that anything they can count needs a "number name" (one block, two blocks) and that the list of number names has a set order (1-2-3-4). They may know that numbers stand for certain quantities. They notice that amounts change when things are added or removed. Here are some ways you can help preschool children learn about numbers.

Use the language of numbers

- Use words like amount, enough, none, before/after, most, pair, take away.
- Help children ask and answer thought-provoking questions involving numbers: "How many of our caterpillars haven't made cocoons?" "Do I have more silver keys or more gold keys? How can you tell?"

Make the numbers part of the daily routine

- Have children "sign-in" by moving a nametag or other token from one basket to another. They count the leftover tokens to find out how many are absent.
- Ask children to set tables with one napkin and one cup per chair.

- Encourage voting on classroom issues. "Ten people want apples for snack Friday. Seven want crackers."

Provide games that involve numbers and counting

- Teach card games such as Go Fish or Animal Rummy.
- Provide games such as Tic Tac Toe, or checkers.
- Use "choosing" games such as One Potato Two Potato.
- Teach active games such as Farmer in the Dell, scavenger hunts and variations on bowling.

Offer activities that promote working with numbers

- Ask children to use tally marks to answer questions such as "How many cars in the lot?" or "Who has a pet at home?" They can tabulate the marks as a group.
- Help children construct graphs to compare amounts: "Did more people eat plain popcorn or cheese popcorn?"
- Provide blocks, integer rods, plastic animals, coins, etc., for making rows, pairs, and other groupings.

- Teach songs or finger plays such as "Five Little Ducks" or "Ten Little Monkeys."
- Share books that involve numbers, counting, parts and wholes.
- Invite children to create their own games that use spinners or dice.
- Invite children to "hunt" for numbers around them.
- Post a number chart or cards with the numerals where children can easily use them.
- Model using the principles of counting. Touch each object when counting aloud ("One bag, two bags, three bags....")*



*Illinois Early Learning Project
Illinois State Board of Education

Kindergarten Readiness Classroom Activities

During May and continuing through the summer, plan classroom activities and routines for your children entering Kindergarten that will help familiarize them with Kindergarten expectations. For more information and resources on creating a smooth transition to Kindergarten visit www.terrifictransitions.org.

- Practice the morning routines such as a "moment of silence" or pledge to the flag.
- Have the children practice raising hands to answer questions.
- Practice carrying items on cafeteria trays (or cookie sheets) - this can be done in centers as well as during meals and snacks or on the playground.
- Learn to open individual milk cartons and straws.
- Learn to open individual condiment (ketchup, mustard, etc.) packets.
- Practice walking as a group from the classroom to other locations in the building.
- Have the children go to another classroom so another teacher can "teach" them a brief special lesson (such as music or P.E). This helps the children get used to the idea that they may have other teachers for "specials".
- Answer "roll call".
- Practice getting on and off a school bus.

- Practice checking out library books (using a card) from the public library, classroom library, or site office.
- Read aloud children's books that are about Kindergarten.
- Learn to sharpen a pencil.
- Plan activities that require cooperative interaction. Some ideas are:

- Work with a friend to put together teacher made puzzles
- Work with a friend to match simple word cards with symbol cards
- Work with a friend to match classmates' name with their picture
- Paint with a partner
- Build with a buddy
- Use group or partner playground games

Remember that these ideas are to familiarize the children with new concepts and/or routines so we want to make them fun! Be sure to have many discussions (large group, small group, and individual) about why you are doing these things.

Books for May

Use high quality children's literature for introducing lessons and focusing on specific instructional skills. After using the book during either large group or small group activities, include it in the library center for the children to use independently.

Listen to the Rain by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault

Listen to the Rain is a poem telling the story of a rainstorm. Children will enjoy the many different sounds that rain can make from a soft whisper to roaring and pouring.

Where Butterflies Grow by Joanne Ryder

This beautifully illustrated book tells the story of the metamorphosis of the black swallowtail butterfly. This book offers many vocabulary development opportunities and the children will enjoy the pictures of the details of the caterpillar's changes.

The Very Quiet Cricket by Eric Carle

Eric Carle's books are always a big hit with children. This is the story of a cricket wanting to chirp as it meets a variety of insects.

Counting Books

Use high-quality literature to reinforce math skills by including counting books during large and small group activities.

Have You Seen My Duckling? by Nancy Tafuri

Ten, Nine, Eight by Molly Bang

The Doorbell Rang by Pat Hutchins

Over in the Meadow by Olive A. Wadsworth

The Right Number of Elephants by Jeff Sheppard

One Cow Moo Moo by David Bennett

Rooster's Off to See the World by Eric Carle



FEATURED AUTHOR: ERIC CARLE

Author Information

Eric Carle was born on June 25, 1929 in Syracuse, New York to German-American parents. When he was just beginning first grade, Eric's family moved to Stuttgart, Germany. Eric showed an interest in art and painting with bright bold colors at an early age and this was encouraged by his family. He went on to work as a professional designer and art director. An interest in children's literature blossomed when he agreed to illustrate books written by Bill Martin, Jr. Carle's illustrations feature bright colors, original art techniques, lively animals, playful details and clever paper engineering. Carle has written over 40 books which are a favorite of early childhood teachers and children everywhere.

More information on Eric Carle and ideas for using his books in the classroom can be found at <http://www.eric-carle.com>.



The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Flannel Board Story

PA ELS: Receptive Language: Develop and expand listening and understanding skills

Visit this web site to download patterns and templates to go along with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

<http://www.dltk-teach.com/books>

Use the flannel board pieces during large group time and then make accessible to children to use to retell the story during center time.

Tissue Paper Collages

PA ELS: Creative Arts: Use a variety of visual art forms for creative expression and representation

When reading the book, with children draw attention to the illustrations. Give the students a variety of colored tissue paper and allow them to tear the paper and glue it on construction paper.

Vocabulary

PA ELS: Expressive Language: Communicate ideas, experiences and feeling for a variety of purposes

For each book, add word and picture cards to the writing center for children to make their own book.

The Very Busy Spider

Creating Spider Webs

PA ELS: Creative Arts: Use a variety of visual art forms for creative expression and representation

Materials: black construction paper, cotton swabs, lids, thick white school glue, scissors

Show the children the illustrations of the spider's web and have them talk about how the design changed. Have them look at the beginning of the web, the middle and the beautiful finished web the owl saw at night.

Cut a sheet of black construction paper lengthwise into three sections. Pour glue into large jar lids or small bowls. Show children how to dip the swab into the glue and use the glue to paint the lines of a spider web.

The Very Quiet Cricket

What do You Hear?

PA ELS: Literacy: Develop an understanding of the sounds of language

Make tape recordings of various animals and their sounds or sounds from the environment (bell ringing, car starting, ball bouncing, etc.)

Ask the students to identify the source of each recorded sound.

"What's Next?" Predictions at Story Time

When we make predictions, we form ideas about the future based on what we've already seen or done. Preschool children are beginning to notice patterns, sequences, and other connections that help them guess what to expect from spoken and written language.

Let the children judge the book by its cover.

Hold the book so the children can look at the whole cover illustration. Read aloud the book title and the names of the author and the illustrator.

Now that they have some clues about the book, ask the children, "What do you think could be going on in this book?" Ask them to explain their answers. "Adam, what makes you think this book is about a frog who wears clothes?"

Encourage children to respond to each other's ideas. "Lola predicts that the story will be funny because she remembers another funny book by this author. Charlie, what do you think about that?"

Ask children what they think the illustrator will do to help tell the story. "Do you expect the illustrator to use lots of colors? Or will she use just one or two?"

Help children to list their predictions, so they can revisit their ideas after they hear the story.

Read the book together to find out what happens.

If the children don't object, pause in the middle of a story so they can guess what might happen next. Keep in mind that this activity can interrupt the flow of a story. It may annoy the children if you do it too often.

"What gives you that idea?"

If you're reading the book over several days, you might invite the children to draw what they predict will happen next in the story before you continue reading.

Check predictions together.

When the story ends or when you stop reading for the day, ask the children to revisit their predictions. "Did the story go the way you expected?" "Did any of the illustrations surprise you?"

Invite children to draw or dictate different endings to the story.