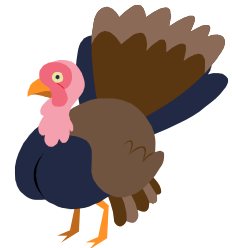


# PEAK Classroom Connections

*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

### PA Pre-K Counts

Work Sampling System data entry due on December 15

### Revision of PA Early Learning Standards

The Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards (Infants-Kindergarten) have been revised as a part of the Standards Aligned System. The new standards include the Big Idea and Essential Questions for each standard area. Copies of the standards can be purchase or downloaded at [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org). Click on the Career Development tab and go to Standards.

### PEAK Teacher Mini-Grants

The PEAK Classroom Quality Mini-Grant applications have been sent to your sites. If you are interested in applying for a mini-grant, talk with your directors or contact Mary Rieck for a copy of the application.

Last year, five teachers were awarded mini-grants of \$500 each for projects to enhance their classrooms. This year we would like to award ten grants of \$500 each. Applications are due **December 1, 2009**.

### Family Literacy Nights

Pottstown School District will begin a series of Family Literacy Nights in January for parents of preschool and kindergarten children. The parents and children will be invited to participate in activities that will support early literacy development. Watch for information in December or January to share with your families. We hope of have a lot of our community families participate in the sessions. If you are interested in working with a kindergarten teacher to present the information, contact Mary Rieck to get involved.

### November and December Family Activities

Apples are the featured item at the November Family Breakfast Clubs. Parents have the opportunity to sample several variety of apples and receive apple recipes and other healthy living resources. In December, Whitney and Kathy are planning Snack Clubs at pick-up time and will focus on Healthy Holiday Snacks.



### **Contact Information:**

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**Whitney Leone**  
Family Specialist  
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**Jeff Sparagana, Ed.D.**  
Director of Education/  
Human Resources

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

## November Finger Plays and Rhymes—ELS Literacy

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

### Five Little Turkeys

Five little turkeys by the barn door,  
One waddled off, then there were four.  
Four little turkeys out under the tree,  
One waddled off, then there were three.  
Three little turkeys with nothing to do,  
One waddled off, then there were two.  
Two little turkeys in the noonday sun,  
One waddled off, then there was one.  
One little turkey—better run away!  
Soon will come Thanksgiving Day!

### Mr. Turkey

(If You're Happy and You Know It)

Hello, Mr. Turkey, how are you?  
Hello, Mr. Turkey, how are you?  
With a gobble, gobble, gobble,  
And a wobble, wobble, wobble,  
Hello, Mr. Turkey, how are you?

### My Turkey

I have a turkey big and fat.

He spreads his wings  
(Fan hands at hips.)  
And walks like that.  
(Struts back and forth.)  
His daily corn he would not miss,  
(Pretend to eat corn.)  
And when he talks, he sounds like this—  
Gobble, gobble, gobble.

### Gobble, Gobble Song

(Pop Goes the Weasel)

A turkey is a funny bird,  
His head goes wobble, wobble.  
He know just one funny word,  
It's Gobble, Gobble, Gobble

### Mr. Turkey

Mr. Turkey's tail is big and wide,  
He swings it when he walks.  
His neck is long,  
His chin is red  
And he gobbles when he talks.

Mr. Turkey is so tall and proud.

He dances on his feet.  
And on each Thanksgiving Day,  
He's something good to eat.

### I'm Mr. Turkey

I'm Mr. Turkey, Turkey, Turkey  
I'm Mr. Turkey Big and Fat.  
I've got feathers, feathers, feathers,  
I've got feathers down my back.  
When I walk I wobble, wobble, wobble,  
When I talk I gobble, gobble, gobble.  
I'm Mr. Turkey, Turkey, Turkey  
I'm Mr. Turkey Big and Fat.



## Parents as Partners

The following list describes assumptions about families under a strengths-based perspective:

All people are basically good

- All people have strengths
  - All people have different but equally important skills, abilities, and knowledge
  - All people need support and encouragement
  - All families have hopes, dreams, and wishes for their children
  - Families are resourceful, but all families do not have equal access to resources
  - Families should be assisted in ways that help them maintain their dignity and hope
- Families should be equal partners in the relationship with service providers

Think about a family that you feel uncomfortable or challenged by. Look at each assumption in the list above, and think about this family. If it is difficult to apply all of the assumptions to this family, start with just one or two.

Does your perception of this family change using these assumptions? Do you find that it may be easier interacting with parents using a different (more positive) perspective?

*Taken from "From Parents to Partners – Building a Family-Centered Early Childhood Program" by Janis Keyser*

**If you need assistance with resources for the families in your program or ideas for classroom family involvement, contact Whitney Leone, PEAK Family Engagement Specialist, at 610-326-1610 extension 233 or [wleone@fsmontco.org](mailto:wleone@fsmontco.org).**



**Remember to notify Whitney if you have special activities planned for your families.**



## Vocabulary Development

Remember it is very important to be constantly introducing new words to children. Vocabulary can be displayed on chart paper or on sentence strips. Be sure to include a picture or symbol to go along with each word. Try this idea: Collect photo albums. A small index card fits perfectly in the slots where you would normally put pictures. Add topical vocabulary with simple illustrations (drawing, photo, sticker, clip-art, etc.) to blank index cards. Insert the cards in the blank pages.

Use the front page to title your collection of vocabulary words. If you begin to do this regularly, soon you will have a diverse collection of vocabulary you can use year after year. Also, consider this idea: download seasonal or topical clip-art from your computer and add the word or phrase at the bottom of each page that describes the art. Compile the pages in a three ring notebook, using plastic page protectors for longer life. These are fun to make, and you can keep and add to them over time.

### TURKEY TALK

This is a great time to talk turkey with your children. Introduce turkeys to your children by sharing facts. Draw a picture of a turkey or have a picture of a real turkey (or both) and then label the turkey's parts. Great new vocabulary will be introduced!

Be sure to label the following: beak, feathers, caruncles (fleshy growths of skin found on head and neck of turkey), snood (growth of skin above its beak), wattle (piece of skin hanging from a turkey's throat), beard, and spurs.

Here are some other turkey facts: A male turkey is called a tom or a gobbler. A female turkey is called a hen. A newly hatched turkey is called a poult. Turkeys feed along the ground, pecking for acorns, berries, seeds, insects, nuts, and mushrooms. They roost in trees to sleep.



## Living Healthy on Less

It is possible to save on health care, but skipping regular checkups and screenings to avoid insurance co-pays isn't one of them. These checkups and screenings are meant to look for health problems that, if nipped in the bud, will cost a lot less to treat than if they are allowed to get worse. It is a lot easier to treat things earlier than later. Suggested strategies for cutting health-care costs include:

Talk to your doctor about switching to cheaper medications. There may be cheaper alternatives or it might be possible to get added to a reduced-fee prescription list that some chains offer.

Stay out of the emergency department by having a family doctor to care for non-emergent needs. If you go to an emergency department with a complaint they will usually order tests, x-rays etc. By seeing a family doctor who has the benefit of follow-up care, unnecessary tests, x-rays etc. can be done at a later time, but only if needed.

Treat colds and flu at home. If a cold or virus is following its usual course with you, then you probably do not need to see the doctor. See your doctor if you are experiencing worse symptoms or different symptoms.

Call the doctor's office for advice. Often a question or concern can be addressed without a visit to the doctor.

**Kathy Perry, PEAK Early Childhood Health Specialist**

# Stone Soup

Read *Stone Soup* to the children. Send a note home to parents describing the activity and requesting that they send in a specific ingredient.

## Soup Recipe

1 clean river stone  
2 potatoes  
2 celery sticks  
2 cans of chicken  
2 to 4 cups water  
2 carrots  
1 small onion  
2 cans chicken broth  
1 small box of macaroni (pre-cooked)  
Salt and pepper to taste

Help children wash the vegetables.  
Help the children cut the vegetables

into bite-sized pieces and then add them to the big pot. Cut potatoes lengthwise so the children can cut them easily into smaller pieces. Supervise this step closely.

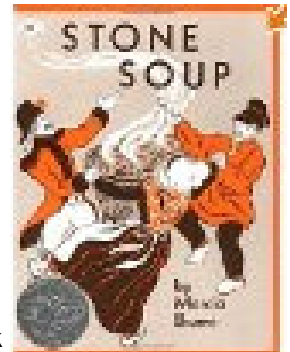
Put the river stone into the pot. Encourage the children to add the chicken broth, chicken and water. (Do not add the macaroni until the soup is ready to serve).

Bring the soup to a boil, then simmer for about 30-40 minutes (adult only).

Remove the pot from the heat (adult only) and add the macaroni. Let it cool slightly

Pour the soup into bowls and serve it with crackers.

While eating, talk about who brought in which ingredient and how important it was to make the soup complete. Discuss the changes in the consistency of the vegetables after cooking. Ask how the soup might have been different. What part did the stone play?



## Materials for Developing Fine Motor Skills

**Children need to manipulate many different types of materials to develop the fine-muscle control for writing. Use the ideas below for adding materials to your center areas to focus on fine-motor development.**

- Stringing beads: Use cut, colored straw pieces, painted macaroni, wooden beads, etc. String, yarn, shoelaces, pipe cleaners can be used for stringing.
- Pop-beads
- Pegboards
- Roll small balls of clay using fingertips and arrange into pictures.
- Hide small objects in balls of clay and locate/take out using fingers.
- Pop packaging material.
- Clothespins: Open and close as they are placed on cardboard boxes, cans, etc. Paints letters, numbers, colors, etc. on them for games to play.
- Lacing cards: Make with cardboard and a hole-puncher in various shapes.
- Stamp pads with small handled rubber stamps.
- Lite Bright game with construction paper placed under the design.
- Sort birdseed with tweezers.
- Interlocking blocks
- Tissue paper collage pictures: roll tissue paper in fingers into balls and glue onto paper in various designs.
- Use tweezers to pick up mini-marshmallows, corn-flakes, etc. without breaking or crushing them.

- Blocks: build towers and structures following patterns
- Puzzles
- Nuts and bolts games
- Screw and unscrew jar lids
- Bottle tops: put on/off (various colors and sizes can be used to mix and match.)
- Finger-painting
- Make paper objects by folding paper pieces (hats, boats, airplanes, fans, etc.)
- Magnet games: Pick up small metal objects, such as paperclips and safety pins, using magnets.
- Stand up dominoes on their narrow ends and knock them over to see the domino effect.
- Fishing games: Tie a magnet on a string tied to a pole and try to catch paper fish with paperclips on them.
- Tear out pages of old phone books, one at a time, and crumple them. Then, toss them into a basket target.
- Make hole puncher pictures. Vary the weight and thickness of the paper used.
- Play tug-of-war with small diameter objects such as plastic lacing, coffee stirrers, etc.

