



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

PreK Counts

WWW.PEAKONLINE.ORG

October 2007

All 5 PreK counts sites in the Pottstown area will be open on or before October 29th. Many of these classrooms are brand new and helping to increase the number of high quality Early Childhood Programming in the Pottstown area. This state funded grant has allowed us to offer PreK to 100 Pottstown children, many who wouldn't have had the opportunity otherwise.

We have updated the website with many classroom resources as well as comprehensive units for Fall and Pumpkins. Click on "Information for Teachers" and discover all the new resources.

Special points of interest:

- PEAK News
- Literacy
- Pumpkin Fun
- Fire Prevention Month
- Alliteration and Rhyme
- Lovely Leaves
- Family Connection

Reminders and Updates

BSSI assessments will begin on Wednesday the 10th and need to be completed by 10/24/07. Remember that *all* information must be filled out completely and if anything is missing it will be sent back to you for completion. Thank you for your cooperation through this busy month!

The Kindergarten Transition Team is continuing to meet to improve the continuity and smoothness during the transition from the community based programs to the Pottstown School District. We will be having "buddy schools" this year- each program will be paired with an Elementary school to plan some activities for the coming year. Check the PEAK website for updates on details.

Join us for **Educator's Night Out** November 8th at 6pm at the High School. Come for an opportunity to meet representatives from your "buddy school" and plan transition activities for the school year- dinner will be served.

COOL WEBSITES

My new favorite website for classroom ideas- <http://www.drjean.org>. It is updated with monthly ideas and themes with lots of literacy ideas.



For more ideas on Fall themes visit <http://www.allthedaze.com/fall.html>

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Fall's Fabulous and Fantastic Phonologic Activities (L 1.1)



- Use alliteration (as illustrated in this section's title) to playfully introduce children to initial word sounds
- Be playful and silly with words and rhyming, don't be afraid to use nonsensical and silly words
- Use children's names in rhyming
- Use children's literature as a springboard for rhyming for example after reading *Green Eggs and Ham* ask children to think of words that rhyme with Sam and Ham.
- Play word games with children by word stretching (ex. ccccaaaaatttttt, what is that word?) and word completion (ex. ___at, what sound can we put in front of that to make a word?)

Stirring our Brew

Stirring and stirring and stirring our brew...(Pretend to stir.)

Wooooooo! Woooooo! (Cup hands by mouth.)

Stirring and stirring and stirring our brew...(Stir.)

Wooooooo! Woooooo! (Cup hands by mouth.)

Tip-toe. Tip-toe. BOO! (Pretend to tip-toe.)

Three Little Witches

One little, two little, three little witches. (Hold up 3 fingers.)

Flying over haystacks, flying over ditches. (Fly fingers in the air.)

Slid down the moon and tore their britches! (Smile and cover your eyes.)

Hi, ho, Halloween's here! (Clap hands.)

Pumpkin Fun



Once I had a Pumpkin

(Tune: "Lassie and Laddie")

Oh, once I had a pumpkin, a pumpkin, a pumpkin. (Hands over head like

Oh, once I had a pumpkin with no face at all. a pumpkin.)

With no eyes and no nose and no mouth and no teeth. (Point to facial

Oh, once I had a pumpkin with no face at all. features.)

So I made a jack-o-lantern, jack-o-lantern, jack-o-lantern. (Draw a jack-o-

So I made a jack-o-lantern with a big funny face. lantern in the air.)

With big eyes and a big nose and big mouth and big teeth. (Draw facial

So I made a jack-o-lantern with a big funny face. features in the air.)

Pumpkin Paint

Mix equal parts of flour and salt. Stir in orange tempera paint. (Obviously, if it's powdered, you will need to add some water, too.) Add a spoonful of cinnamon or pumpkin pie spice to the paint and stir. Children can paint a pumpkin, pumpkin pie, or whatever they want. Their painting will be textured and smell good, too!

Pumpkin Play Dough

Make play dough following your favorite recipe. Add red and yellow food coloring to make it orange. Let the children knead in pumpkin pie spices. They'll have fun making pumpkins, pies, and other objects.

Pumpkin Seeds

- Wash and dry pumpkin seeds and use them for math activities. Children could make sets, count them, use them for addition or subtraction, etc
- Put pumpkin seeds along with other seeds in the science center for exploration. Or in the math center for sorting.
- Bring in a large pumpkin and small pumpkin and have children guess which has

Fire Prevention Month

From Sandra Leh, PEAK Early Childhood Health Specialist

Fire Safety does not need to be a serious or scary topic for children. The key is for the children to learn how to escape from a fire safely; not to become scared of being in a fire. By tailoring activities and lessons to the age of the child, lessons can still be taught...while children have fun in the process. Here are some fun activity ideas that you can use to get the safety message across while having fun in the process.

Field Trip Time

Since children are sometimes frightened by fire fighters (and others in uniform), teachers can plan a special trip to take them to a fire station and introduce them to uniformed fire fighters. Call the station and schedule an appointment in advance, so that staff can be on hand to spend some special time with the children.

Fire Safety books teach lessons well

Read children books on fire safety or, for the youngest children, about fire trucks and their purpose, and fire stations. There are many to choose from such as "No Dragons for Tea: Fire Safety for Children (And Dragons); "Stop Drop and Roll" (A book about fire safety)

R-E-D, Red: Fire Trucks are Red

Choose the color RED as a theme and build on fire safety through the use of red fire trucks. Have them draw a red fire truck, a red fire extinguisher and any other red elements and have children wear red clothing.

Exit, Exit: Where are You?

Take a walk around the child care center and hunt for EXIT signs. Keep tally marks of all the signs found. Turn it into a game. If possible, turn the lights off in a building and let children see the EXIT signs remain lit and then discuss why. As a follow up, have children create their own special EXIT signs as a project.

Hats off to fire fighters

Create fire fighter hats for the children and have them pretend to be firefighters. Discuss equipment that a fire fighter needs and why. Let children see and learn how to use a fire extinguisher.

Visit the United States Fire Administration website for Kids at <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/kids>

Books with Alliteration and Rhyme

Alliteration

The B Book (B), Phyllis McGinley
Four Fur Feet (F), Margaret Brown
Some Smug Slug (S), Pamela Duncan
Sheep on a Ship (SH), Nancy Shaw
Watch William Walk (W), Ann Jonas
Dinorella: A Prehistoric Fairytale (D), Pamela Duncan Edwards

Rhyme

Big Fat Hen, Keith Baker
One Duck Stuck, Phyllis Root
Mouse Mess, Linnea Riley
Barnyard Banter, Denise Fleming
1.2., Buckle My Shoe, Liz Loveless
In the Small, Small Pond, Denise Fleming
Puffins Climb, Penguins Rhyme, Bruce McMillan
Mrs. McNosh Hangs Up Her Wash, Sarah Weeks
Guess Who's Coming, Jesse Bear, Bruce Degan
Who Said Moo?, Harriet Ziefert
Jamberry, Bruce Degan
Boo to a Goose, Mem Fox
Silly Sally, Audrey Wood



Lovely Leaves

Leaf Man

Take your students on a leaf walk to collect fallen Autumn leaves. Have each child select a leaf to make a Leaf Man. After gluing the leaf on a piece of construction paper they can add features such as arms, head, legs, etc. Encourage lots of creativity in this activity and then hang the creations on the wall. You can read the book Leaf Man by Lois Ehlert as an accompaniment to the activity.

Math Activities

Leaf Graph (LM 2.6)

Have the children count the number of leaves they collected from each type of tree, and graph the results.

Leaf Count (LM 2.1)

Make pictures of trees with different numbers of leaves on the trees. Have the children count the number of leaves on the tree.

Autumn Leaves

(tune of London Bridge)

Autumn Leaves are falling down
Falling Down, falling down
Autumn Leaves are falling down
Down to the ground

Take a rake and pile them up
Pile them up, pile them up
Take a rake and pile them up
Yellow Red and brown



Dramatic Play

Raking Leaves (CA 3)

Supply the children with smaller rakes to add to the dramatic play area. Let them pretend they are raking leaves.

Aluminum Foil Leaves (CA 9.1)

Pieces of aluminum foil, leaves, glue, construction paper Set out pieces of aluminum foil and a variety of fall leaves. Let each child select a leaf, place it under a piece of foil, and gently press and rub the foil with his or her hand to get a leaf print. Then have the children glue their leaf prints to the construction paper

Eating Leaves (SC 3.4)

Discuss the food that we eat that are leaves, like lettuce, or cabbage. Have the children try these food items.

Leaf Toss

Take a sheet, or a parachute. Gather real leaves, fabric leaves, or paper leaves. Place them in the middle of the sheet. Gather around the sheet and have the children lift the sheet slowly and then quickly to see how all the leaves "float".

Family Connection

Encourage parents to extend the classroom themes and skill learning at home. One way to do this is by creating thematic family backpacks. These are put together by the teacher and are taken home by the parents- for a week or weekend and then brought back to share with other families.

Each backpack should include items for the parents to engage their child at home and create a connection between school and home. This is also a great way for parents to see and understand what developmentally appropriate practices look like and what you are doing in the classroom everyday.

Make sure to include instructions for your parents

If time or resources prohibit you from making a theme backpack, just send a letter home with ideas for families and encourage them to do some of the activities at home and let them know how it connects to what they are learning in school.

For a Fall Themed backpack include a Fall book such as *Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf* by Louise Ehlert, *Yes, Dear* by Diana Wynne Jones or *Nature Spy* by Shelley Rotner and Ken Dreisler.

You can include :

- some fabric leaves of various sizes and shapes which the children can arrange from smallest to largest or sort by color and shape.
- Cut out 5 pumpkins from felt or use small plastic ones from the craft store and include the words to 5 Little Pumpkins Sitting on a fence for parents and children to act out together.
- Include colored pencils and paper for making leaf rubbings
- Include some paint and paper for families to create apple stamps (cut an apple in half and use it as a stamper)
- Have parents with their children roll up newspaper and cut slits at one end to make brooms for children to "ride"