

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

PA Pre-K Counts

On Friday, October 9, Governor Edward Rendell signed the state budget determining funding levels for all programs and agencies receiving state funds. PA Pre-K Counts is funded in 2009-2010 at the same level as 2008-2009. The PEAK Pre-K Counts sites are rushing to begin classes the week of October 12 and will serve 126 at-risk Pottstown children. One change in the eligibility qualifications for Pre-K Counts is that all children must now meet income guidelines of "at or below 300% of the federal poverty level." The files must contain copies of documents verifying income eligibility.

PEAK Professional Development

PEAK will host a professional development session on November 5 on *Understanding the Behavioral Health System*. Public Citizens for Children and Youth will present the training which will be held at the Pottstown School District Administration Building on 230 Beech Street from 5:30-7:30. Come at 5:00 for a light dinner. Register online at www.pakeys.org or contact Mary Rieck at 610-970-6655 or mrieck@pottstownsd.org. PQAS credit will be awarded to participants.

PEAK Teacher Mini-Grants

Now that the state budget is finalized, PEAK will move forward with second year of the PEAK Teacher Mini-Grants process. Last year, five teachers were awarded mini-grants of \$500 each for projects to enhance their classrooms. The application will be updated this year based on feedback we received. Watch for the application in early November and start thinking about a project to submit. This year we would like to award ten grants of \$500 each.

Behavior Management Support

We are contracting with Montgomery County Intermediate Unit to provide behavior management support for partner classrooms again this school year. Kiki will start visiting classrooms in November.

Family Activities

Whitney Leone (notice her new married name) has worked on a lot of ideas this summer for family activities. She will be setting up special family activities at each site. Make sure you let her know about any special classroom activities that you plan that involve families.



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October Finger Plays and Rhymes—ELS Literacy

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

This Little Pumpkin

This little pumpkin was small and round.
This little pumpkin sat on the ground.
This little pumpkin was short and fat.
This little pumpkin wore a silly hat.
This little pumpkin had a grin so keen.
This little pumpkin said, "Happy Halloween!"

Five Little Pumpkins

Five little pumpkins were sitting on the ground.
The first little pumpkin was short and round,
The second little pumpkin was happy to be found.
The third little pumpkin had a curly vine,
The fourth little pumpkin liked sunshine.
The fifth little pumpkin grew so quick,
Now all five pumpkins are ready to be picked.

Pumpkin, Pumpkin

Pumpkin, pumpkin,
Sitting on the wall,
Pumpkin, pumpkin,
Tip and fall.

Pumpkin, pumpkin,
Rolling down the street,
Pumpkin, pumpkin,
Trick-or-treat!

Little Pumpkin

I'm a little pumpkin orange and round,
When I'm sad, my face wears a frown.
But when I am happy and all aglow,
Watch my smile just grow and grow!

The Pumpkins Are Here

(Tune: Farmer in the Dell)

The pumpkins are here; the pumpkins are there.
The pumpkins, the pumpkins are everywhere.
The pumpkins are up; the pumpkins are down.
The pumpkins, the pumpkins are all around
The pumpkins are in; the pumpkins are out.
The pumpkins, the pumpkins are all about.
The pumpkins are low; the pumpkins are high.
The pumpkins, the pumpkins all say,
"Good-bye."

Where is Mr. Pumpkin

(Tune: Way Down Yonder in the Paw Paw Patch)

Where, oh where, is Mr. Pumpkin?
Where, oh where, is Mr. Pumpkin?
Where, oh where, is Mr. Pumpkin?
Where, oh where, is Mr. Pumpkin?
Way down yonder in the Pumpkin Patch!

Pretty Leaves are Falling Down

(Tune: London Bridge)

Pretty leaves are falling down, falling down,
falling down.
Pretty leaves are falling down, all around the town.

Let's rake them up in a pile, in a pile, in a pile.
Let's rake them up in a pile, all around the town.

Let's all jump in and have some fun,
have some fun, have some fun.
Let's all jump in and have some fun, all around the town.



Math Pumpkin Ideas

Too Long, Too Short, Just Right

Objective: Predict, develop understanding of comparative relationships

Bring a pumpkin to class. Place a strip of making tape around the largest part of the pumpkin. Discuss with children the size of the pumpkin. Place three pieces of paper cut into pumpkin shapes on the floor.

Label the paper pumpkins, "Too Long, Too Short, Just Right." Have each child estimate the circumference of the pumpkin and cut a piece of yarn that length. When everyone has cut a piece of yarn, children measure their pieces of yarn around the pumpkin and place on the correct pumpkin shape. Pieces of yarn can be counted to see how many pieces were too long, too short or just right.

Graduated Sizes

Objective: Develop understanding of comparative relationships

Have several pumpkins in different sizes and paper pumpkins in graduated sizes for each child. Using the pumpkins put them in order and discuss small, medium and large. Mix the pumpkins and have children place in order. After ordering the actual pumpkins, have children use the paper pumpkins and put them in order.

Flannel Board Pumpkins

Objective: Develop an understanding of numbers

Cut 10 pumpkin shapes out of orange flannel. Ask the children to select a number. Put the pumpkins on the flannel board one by one.

Tell the children to quietly say when the correct number of pumpkins are on the flannel board. Repeat with another number. Allow children to also place the flannel pumpkins on the board.

Pumpkin Subtraction

Objective: Develop an understanding of numbers and quantity

Place several pumpkin shapes on the flannel board. Count the shapes together. Have children close their eyes and remove several shapes and place in a bag or box. Children open eyes and guess how many shapes are in the bag.

Pumpkin Seeds

Objective: Develop an understanding of numbers and quantity

After carving the pumpkin, wash and dry seeds. The seeds can be used in the balance for measuring activities. They can be used for counting. Cut 5 pumpkin shapes from construction paper. On each shape, write a numeral and add the correct number of dots on the paper. Children count the correct number of seeds on each pumpkin.





Fall Creative Ideas

Pumpkin Collages

Objective: Creative process and express individuality

After participating in carving a pumpkin, give each child a pumpkin shape cut from construction paper. Have children create the inside of the pumpkin by gluing on pumpkin seeds and orange yarn.

Finger Paint

Objective: Creative process and observe changes in environment

Give each child a large sheet of finger paint paper cut into a pumpkin shape. Place a spoonful of red and yellow finger paint on the paper. Children mix the paint and see the color changes.

Pumpkin Stamps

Objective: Creative process and express individuality

Cut carrots into ½ inch rounds. Dip into orange tempera paint and stamp on sheets of paper to make pumpkins.

Torn Paper Pumpkins

Objective: Creative expression, fine motor development

Give each child a paper plate and a sheet of orange construction paper. Have children tear paper in small pieces and glue on paper plate. Children can add face using black paper or markers.

Pine Cone Painting

Objective: Engage in creative process and express individuality

Collect an assortment of pine cones. Allow children to dip pine cones in tempera paint and roll pine cones on a sheet of construction paper.

Acorn Painting

Objective: Engage in creative process and express individuality

Have children place a piece of paper in a shallow box. Dip several acorns in tempera paint. Place the acorns on top of the paper in the box and tip box to roll acorns around paper to make designs



Pumpkin Science

Pumpkin Float

Objective: Predict, observe, compare

Use several different sizes of pumpkins. Have children estimate whether the pumpkins will sink or float. Record predictions on a chart. Using a tub of water, experiment with each pumpkin. Did it sink or float? Did the size make a difference? Would a can of pumpkin float?

Orange Drops

Objective: Observe changes in environment

Give each child a piece of waxed paper and a flat toothpick (supervise children closely using toothpicks). On the waxed paper, scatter several drops of red water. Use the toothpick to move the drops of water around the paper. The drops can be separated and joined together. After experimenting with the red drops, add several drops of yellow water. Have the children join the red and yellow drops together.

Planting Pumpkins

Objective: Acquire knowledge of life science

Buy a package of pumpkin seeds. Plant in cups or pan of soil. Observe and chart growth.

Orange Goop

Objective: Observe changes in environment, language development

Mix 2 parts cornstarch with 1 part water to a sticky but loose consistency. Pour on “messy” tray for children to explore. Add a few drops of red and yellow food coloring and allow children to mix and see the change in color.



October Recipes

Pumpkin Faces

English muffins
Spreadable orange cheese
Slices and pieces of vegetables such as: black olives, celery, carrots, peppers

Spread cheese over an English muffin half. Use the pieces of vegetables to make a silly face



Pumpkin Pancakes

2 cups biscuit mix
1 egg
1 cup milk
½ cup canned pumpkin
½ teaspoon cinnamon

Mix all ingredients together. Cook on a griddle or in frying pan. Serve with butter and syrup.

Apple Pancakes

Pancake mix
Apple, peeled and chopped
Cinnamon

Cook chopped apple until tender.

Mix pancake mix according to directions. Add cooked apple and a small amount of cinnamon to batter. Form small pancakes and cook according to directions

Apple Salad (individual portion)

¼ apple, cut
Celery, small piece, cut
5 raisins
1 teaspoon mayonnaise
1 walnut, broken

Add all ingredients to bowl or cup. Stir to mix.



Great Fall Books to Read to Children

Reading aloud with children is a wonderful activity. Children of all ages love to be read to. Support the love of reading for children in your class by trying the following books: Visit the Pottstown Public Library for books and resources. The library can be contacted at 610-970-6551.

Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf, by Lois Ehlert. The author uses watercolor and collage to share fascinating evolutions and even planting tips for a sugar maple tree. Youngsters will relate to the vivid details and enjoy the interesting facts.

Leaf Jumpers, by Carole Gerber. Hand-colored linoleum prints tell the story of a brother and sister with the family dog enjoying autumn activities, such as raking a pile of leaves and jumping in!

Fall Leaves Fall!, by Zoe Hall. This story tells of the many wonderful adventures to be had simply by experiencing autumn: watching leaves fall to the ground, catching leaves, collecting leaves, comparing shapes, and raking and jumping into a pile.

Fletcher and the Falling Leaves, by Julia Rawlinson. Fletcher, a young fox, is worried about his favorite tree. Is it sick? Its leaves are turning brown and its bark is dropping. Read to find out how Fletcher tries to help his tree by sticking the leaves back on and how he discovers the marvelous, beautiful mysteries of his favorite tree.

Apple Math

Apple Patterns

Objective: Identify and create patterns

Have a student create a pattern using apples of different colors. Other students can copy and extend the pattern using apple shapes or appropriately colored manipulatives. (Flannel board apple shapes can also be used for patterns and as a visual during the apple finger plays.)

What Apple Do I Like?

Objective: Awareness of numbers, comparative relationships, graphing.

Have students examine red, green and yellow apples. Cut each apple and allow students to taste a sample of each. Discuss the differences in the way the apples taste. Have students select

colored paper shape of the apple they liked the best. Using a floor graph, graph the apple shapes to determine the favorite color of apple.

How Much Does It Weigh?

Objective: Observe comparative relationships

Use a simple balance scale and an assortment of manipulatives, have students predict how many of a particular type of manipulatives will equal the weight of the apple. When the balance scale is level, count together how many bears (or cubes, etc.) it takes to weigh the same as the apple.

