



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*



Summer 2007

## Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts

Pottstown has been awarded the state funded Pre-K Counts to fund 100 free Pre-K children in high quality Pre-K classrooms at 6 partner sites.

The YMCA, YWCA, Montgomery Early Learning Centers, Head Start, Warwick Child Care Centers on Urner St, and Kindercare Learning Centers will each be hosting a high quality Pre-K class under PA's Pre-K Counts.

Classes will be up and running by October 29th and run through the end of the school year.

This is an exciting and wonderful opportunity for Pottstown's children and families. If you know of families that have children that are either 3 or 4 and reside in the borough of Pottstown let them know about this unique opportunity. They can sign up by contacting one of the partner sites or calling PEAK directly.

Thanks to every single person who made their voice heard to their legislators in support of this valuable asset to the families of our community and state.

Special points of interest:

- Ⓢ Pre-K Counts
- Ⓢ Professional Development
- Ⓢ Classroom Procedures
- Ⓢ Phonologic Awareness-Rhyming
- Ⓢ Back to School Activities

NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES

Mary: [mrieck@pottstownsd.org](mailto:mrieck@pottstownsd.org)

Emily: [ebaddele@pottstownsd.org](mailto:ebaddele@pottstownsd.org)

## Professional Development Opportunities

Below is a list of Professional Development Opportunities that PEAK will offer through the remainder of 2007. Please note those trainings that are mandatory and those that are of interest to you. Remember all PEAK trainings are eligible for ACT 48 and PQAS credit.

### August

22- Literacy Training at PSD for site literacy reps

### September

12- PEAK meeting for all PEAK staff (mandatory for teachers) at YMCA 1:15-2:30pm

14- Blueprint Training - for all staff using Blueprint **RSVP required** at YWCA, 8-4pm

### October

18- New Pre-K Counts Teacher Institute

-9am-4pm

-**Mandatory** for all Pre-K Counts Teachers

- at PSD Administration Building

22- Literacy Training

-**Mandatory** for all Literacy Reps

-all day

-location TBD

Date TBD- Creative Curriculum Training

### Contact Information:

Mary Rieck  
PEAK Coordinator  
610-970-6655

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

# Classroom Procedures Require Some Teaching

From *The First Days of school* by Harry K. Wong and Rosemary T. Wong, 1998, p167-194

Classroom procedures and routines need to be taught to children from the very first day of school. This gives children a framework for how they are expected to behave and work at school.

Procedures are necessary for an effective classroom, when children know and understand expectations it greatly reduces discipline problems and increases efficiency of the teacher's time.

A vast majority of behavior problems in the classroom are caused by failure of students to follow procedures and routines. It is up to the teacher to establish these procedures in a thoughtful way and to teach students how to be successful at classroom routines. Take some time now, before the school year starts, to establish classroom procedures that will ensure a smooth running class.

The following is a three-step approach to teaching classroom procedures.

1. Explain classroom procedures clearly.

2. Rehearse classroom procedures until they become routine.

- Have students practice the procedure, step by step, under your supervision.

- Have students repeat the procedure until they are able to perform it automatically without supervision.

3. Reinforce a correct procedure and re-teach an incorrect one.

- Determine whether children have learned the procedure or if they need more practice.

- Re-teach the correct procedure if needed and praise the students when it is done correctly

Remember this throughout the year as you introduce new procedures to the class.

## Phonologic Awareness Activity: Rhyming

The emergent literacy skills taught in the early years have been shown to have a significant impact on a child's ability to read later and ultimately school success. Each day should include at least one formal phonological awareness activity as well as many informal activities throughout the day.

Rhyming is one way to help children become familiar with sounds in words. Many of the songs and nursery rhymes we are familiar with already incorporate a simple rhyming scheme:

### I'm a Nut

I'm an acorn, small and round,  
Lying on the cold, cold ground.

People pass and step on me.

That's why I'm all cracked up, you see.

I'm a nut. (clap, clap)

I'm a nut. (clap, clap)

I'm a nut. (clap, clap)

Once children understand how to rhyme words you can incorporate songs that allow children to make up rhymes for themselves such as:

### Down By the Bay

Down by the bay

Where the watermelons grow

Back to my home

I dare not go

For if I do

My mother will say

Have you ever seen \_\_\_\_\_ wearing \_\_\_\_\_  
(cat/hat, ants/pants)

Down by the bay.

### *Alternate versions:*

Have you ever seen a \_\_\_\_\_ eating a \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever seen a \_\_\_\_\_ walking with a \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*note the second word doesn't need to be real, it can be silly, the point is to understand the concept of rhyming not

to memorize pairs of words \*\*\*

Many children's picture books are written in rhyme here is a list:

*Is Your Mama a Llama?*

Deborah Guarino

*Big Fat Hen*, Keith Baker

*One Duck, Stuck*, Phyllis Root

*Mouse Mess*, Linnea Riley

*In the Small, Small Pond*,

Denise Fleming

*Jamberry*, Bruce Degan

*Boo to a Goose*, Mem Fox

*Puffins Climb*, Penguins Rhyme,

Bruce McMillan

*1.2., Buckle My Shoe*, Liz Loveless

*Silly Sally*, Audrey Wood

*Who Said Moo?*, Harriet Ziefert

*Mrs. McNosh Hangs Up Her Wash*,

Sarah Weeks

*Guess Who's Coming, Jesse Bear*,

Bruce Degan

# All About Me

1. Have each child draw a picture of themselves at school. Take time with each child in small group to have them dictate a story about what they do at school. Share this with the parents to help create a stronger family-school connection. (ELS- SS 7.3)
2. After sharing the story with your class *Miss Binder gets ready for Kindergarten* have each child dictate a page in a class book that reads " (child's name) got ready for school by \_\_\_\_\_ " Have children illustrate their work and keep the book on the book shelf for children to read. (ELS- SS 8.1)
3. To help children learn new classmate's names have them play name games at group time.

## Copy Cat Game

Let's play copycat just for fun!

We'll copy \_\_\_\_\_ 'cause s/he's the one!

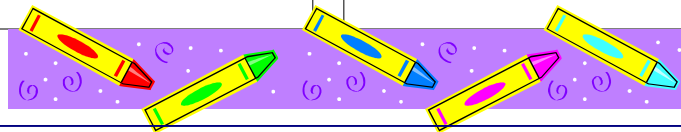
Whatever s/he does we'll all do the same,

Let's all play the copycat game!

4. Have children take turns being in the middle and doing something silly- like dancing, clapping, twirling, etc.

5. It's exciting to move up to the next classroom! Children are able to experience new and different things there.

- Read the book *When I was a Baby* by Eve Thaler.
- Talk in large group about the things they did when they were a baby and the things they are able to do now. You can bring out baby toys to help stimulate the conversation and remind them of things they may have played with before.
- Provide children with sequencing cards of people of different ages. These can be used with the teacher in small group and then left in the math area.



# All About My Family

As children begin school, return to the classroom, or are transitioned to a new classroom it is a good opportunity to assist the child and family with the transition by working making the family feel apart of the classroom. There are many ways to do this.

- Invite parents to share a favorite family picture with the class, or have a day where you use your digital camera to take pictures of the family members. Use these pictures in a classroom collage
- Create a family tree in the classroom. Have each child cut out a paper doll, decorate and label one for each member of their family. Attach each child's chain to a large tree trunk to create branches of your classroom's family tree. Don't forget to include the teaching staff and their families!
- Make a graph of the number of members each child has in their

- Use laminated children's pictures for memory. By the end of the year many children will be able to match names with faces
- Measure each child and put the children's faces baeside their height all along the classroom walls

September dates of interest:

- 4- Newspaper Carrier Day
  - 5- National Cheese Pizza Day
  - 6- Read A Book Day
  - 9- Teddy Bear Day
  - 12- National Chocolate Milkshake Day
  - 16- Collect Rocks Day
  - 18- National Play-Doh™ Day
  - 23- First Day of Autumn
  - 24- First Toy Store opened
  - 26- Johnny Appleseed born in 1774
- ([www.allthedaze.com/apple.html](http://www.allthedaze.com/apple.html))

Books to share about Families:

**All Kinds of Mothers** by Cecily Brownstone

**All Kinds of Families** by Norma Simon

**A Chair for my Mother** by Vera B. Williams

**A Father Like That** by Charolette Zolotow

**Gone Fishing** by Earlene Long

**Leo the Late Bloomer** by Robert Kraus

**A Piano for Julie** by Eleanor Schick

**Something Special for Me** by Vera B. Williams

**Thunderstorm** by Mary Szilagyi

# Rethinking classroom jobs

This year you may want to give some thought to changing up your job chart. This is a good time to think about your job chart and the purpose it serves in the classroom. With some thoughtful planning it can be a great strategy for helping children develop independence and have opportunities to practice responsibility and develop their self regulation. You may also want to create enough jobs for all children to be able to have one.

You can also help children build cooperation and children's negotiation skills by making the jobs in pairs for children to work together.

Also, jobs don't have to be changed daily. They can be rotated weekly or even monthly which provides children enough opportunity to remember their job on their own each day, practice their job and have a true sense of mastery and accomplishment through their job.

**Jobs may include:**

**2 librarians to make sure books are put away properly**



**2 table setters for lunch/2 for snack**

**2 sweepers for sand table**

**2 botanists for watering plants**

**2 Author assistants to help make sure the writing table is well stocked and that materials are put away properly**



**2 artists assistants to make sure there are enough art materials and they are organized**

**2 attendance helpers to count those that are absent and help keep track**

## Classroom Materials-out with the old



Now is a good time to reevaluate your classroom materials. Remember that children can easily become overwhelmed and distracted with too many materials in the classroom.

When deciding if certain materials should be discarded from your classroom ask yourself these questions:

"What purpose does it serve?"

"What Early Learning Standard am I addressing with these materials?"

"What skill are the children learning with these materials?"

If materials are too worn or dirty, broken, missing parts or aren't purposeful **THROW THEM OUT!**

There are plenty of materials that are both educational as well as fun. It is our job as educators to

make sure that children are engaged while they are learning. Quality learning materials go a long way in making this job easier. And remember, if you need assistance or have questions about your classroom materials make an appointment with the Pre-K coach.

As children are new to your classroom make sure that you introduce new items to the children. By not assuming that children will know how to use materials, how to care for them and how to put them away when they are finished- you are more likely to set them up for success.

Also, remember to introduce the different center areas, as well as explain the daily schedule to children. By setting up the expectations for each area and the running of the day, things will operate much more smoothly.



