



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



September 2008

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Update

For the second year in a row, Pottstown's commitment to providing outstanding Early Childhood Education to three and four year olds, has been recognized. The state has awarded the PEAK partnership the opportunity to provide free PreK to 126 children in the Pottstown school district.

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.

We are very excited that we were able to grow this year and offer a full day classroom at the Head Start program at the Administration Building. This will be another great option for families in the Pottstown School District for Early Childhood Care and Education. If you know of a family that might qualify they can either contact one of the participating centers or the PEAK office.

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Professional Development Opportunities

CDA

Below is a list of Professional Development Opportunities that PEAK will offer through the Fall. Remember all PEAK trainings are eligible for ACT 48 and PQAS credit.

Last year we had over 20 staff participate in the CDA program offered through PEAK. We will be running that same program again beginning in September 2008. If you are interested please contact Emily Baddeley ASAP.

Eastern Cohort

We are very pleased to be able to offer the opportunity to ECE staff to receive their Bachelor's Degree through the Eastern University Collaboration. This accelerated program will begin in October 2008 and run for two years.

September

26- Work Sampling System

October

31- PKC inservice day—TBD

November

22-23- PKC inservice day- TBD

Letters, Letters Everywhere

Children will enter your classroom with varying experience and knowledge about letters, words, books and environmental print. In order to make learning accessible to all children it is important not to take a "one size fits all approach" to teaching literacy. Children need lots of chances to manipulate, experiment and interact with literacy in order for it to become concrete. In the beginning of the year and on an ongoing basis it is important to observe children and see where they are cognitively and what would move them along to the next level. Here are some ideas for your writing center:

- Add items to your writing table including: letter stamps, stickers, stamp pad, letter tiles, alphabet blocks letter beads, sponge letters
- Make dyed alphabet pasta with food coloring and rubbing alcohol. Children take a magnifying glass and tweezers and pick out letters in their name

Can you Find Game:

To develop visual discrimination collect small plastic water bottles and place objects (eraser, coin, crayon, hair bow, paper clip, small pencil, button, small toys), or children's names inside and cover them with sand, birdseed or rice. Children shake the bottle and see how many objects they can find. Have them draw pictures or make a list of the ob-

jects they find. Have them draw pictures or make a list of the objects they find.

Letter Links:

Using unifix cubes and dot stickers, affix the names of the children in the classroom- one letter per cube. You can use these when working on name recognition. You can create a sentence strip for each name with dots on them as well so that the children can match up the letters of their name until they are comfortable doing it on their own.



Fall Sensory Experiences



Mud, Glorious Mud!

Remembering that learning isn't always neat and tidy, in this spirit make sure that there is sufficient communication with parents prior to letting children experience this activity. Using various textures of sand and dirt have children experiment with making mud by slowly adding water to the dry materials. Allow children to use various toys with the mud, allow the mud to sit throughout the day to see what happens to it. This is a great experiment to have a teacher sit with a clipboard and record some of the quotes from the children. Children can also collect materials from outdoors to use with their mud- sticks, stones, leaves, etc.



The Best Cooked Play Dough

Ingredients: 1 cup flour, 1/2 cup salt, 2 teaspoons cream of tartar, 1 cup water, 1 tablespoon oil, food coloring.

For group settings double the recipe.

Combine flour, salt, and cream of tartar in a saucepan. Mix liquids and gradually stir them into dry ingredients. When mixture is smooth, cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until a ball forms. Remove from heat and knead until smooth. You can add cinnamon and nutmeg for a delicious fall smell.

Environmental Print and Functional Print

Research has shown that young children's print awareness and letter sound identification increases with exposure to environmental print, especially when it is used as props in play centers and through games and teacher guided learning activities.

Environmental Print refers to the Print that is all around us- restaurant signs, product labels, store signs etc.

Functional Print: refers to the print that we need to use in order to get information- schedules, maps, directions, recipes, etc.

In Centers:

When planning your dramatic play centers brainstorm all the literally materials that might be authentically connected to the theme that can be added for additional literacy activities and exposure. For example:

Home living props: sticky notes, notepads, telephone books, telephone message pads, newspapers, magazines, cook-books, recipe cards, coupons, junk mail, paper grocery sacks, take out menus

Office props: notepads, wall calendar, desk calendar, rolodex, typewriter, invoices, receipt forms, stationery, envelopes, stamps, clipboards, file folders, paper trays, wall signs.

Grocery Store: Newspaper ads, empty food containers, cash register, play money, imitation check pads, bank cards, wall and shelf signs, nutrition fliers, coupons, pencils.

Library/Bookstore: books, magazines, newspapers, cash register, card catalog system, shelf signs, wall signs, writing utensils, date stamp.

You can print out copies of environmental print from the website:

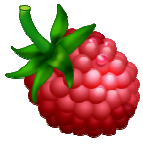
http://www.hubbardscupboard.org/i_can_read_.html

Telling Children's Stories adapted from *Before the Basics* by Bev Bos

Children need to know that stories can come from them. To expect an Elementary child to write an essay is useless unless the child has had previous experience composing prose. The writing experience can start in the preschool years by allowing children to dictate to adults.

When doing dictation with children keep some things in mind:

- Children are fairly inexperienced with writing, you will need to go slowly and not pressure them.
- You may start out with only a few lines but if you let them think and go at their own pace they may soon be giving much more
- Never lead a child to your answers, the "right" answer, or what you think would be a nice tidy conclusion
- You can read the stories that children write during circle or allow the child to read them to the class. This shows that you value their contribution the same as you an author's and that is a very powerful message about respect to a child.
- You can have clipboards on which you can invite children to share a story with you and you write down their dictation- *exactly as they give it*. Then read the story back to them.



Eating Out and Eating Healthy

We are all so busy with work and family that eating out has become a way of life. Eating out, however, sometimes makes it hard to eat healthy!

Following are some tips to help you to eat healthy when eating out.....

At fast food restaurants, bring fresh whole fruit for dessert and choose milk instead of soft drinks

Check out the total fat of menu items if nutrition information is provided on the menu. Choose foods that are moderate in fat.

Choose a restaurant that serves healthy options

Share a meal with a family member. Portions in restaurants are usually much larger than what you should eat for one meal

Select roasted, baked, broiled or grilled meats. Stay away from fried/breaded foods, sauces and gravies

Order soup and salad instead of a traditional meal

Substitute a baked potato or other vegetable for French fries

Request salad dressings and sauces on the side so you can control the amount you eat



Made available through Color Me Healthy
and Contributed by Kathy Perry

Ready For School

(perform the actions that the words suggest)

When I get ready to come to school,
I jump right out of bed,
I wash my face, brush my teeth,
Pull my clothes over my head.
I run down stairs, drink my milk,
And eat my break fast so slow.
Then I wave good-bye as I walk down the street
I'm so happy (*smile*) that I can go.

Wiggle Them (wiggle fingers along with the poem)

Wiggle them, wiggle them,
Wiggle them so.
Wiggle them high,
Wiggle them low.
Wiggle to the left
Wiggle to the right
Wiggle them, wiggle them,
Out of sight.
Clap them...
Roll them... End with an opera clap, just tapping index fingers lightly together
Snap them...

Rags

I've got a dog and his name is Rags; (use hands for ears on each side of head)
He eats so much that his tummy sags! (Both arms in front of tummy)
His ears flip-flop (wag hands on each side of head)
And his tail wig-wags (wiggle bottom)
And when he walks, he walks zig-zag! (point left hand to right, right to left)

He goes flip-flop, Wig-Wag, Zig-Zag!

I love Rags and he loves me! (hug yourself and rock from side to side)
My dog Rags, he loves to play,
He rolls around in the mud all day. (roll arms)
I whistle, (whistle)
He doesn't obey (shake head from side to side)
He always runs the other way! (point the other way)

