



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

Family Engagement Specialist

Lori Davidson has joined PEAK as the part-time Family Engagement Specialist. Lori obtained her AAS in Human Services from MCCC then went on to get her BA in Human Services from Chestnut Hill College and is currently working on her Masters Degree in Human Services Administration. She has been working in the Pottstown community as both the FAST Program Coordinator and the 21st Century Pottstown Middle School Lead Staff member. She will be assisting PEAK in engaging Pottstown's families and parents. You can contact her at (610) 718-5372 or l davidson@fsmontco.org.

Congratulations!!

So much has happened this year with our partners in terms of Quality Improvement and the Keystone STARS system. Montgomery Early Learning Centers has received the STAR 3 designation and YWCA- Ready, Set, Grow has received their STAR 2 designation.



Congratulations to all for a job well done!!

Summer 2007

Special points of interest:

- 📧 PEAK News
- 📧 Literacy
- 📧 Science
- 📧 Summertime Fun
- 📧 Summertime Books
- 📧 ELS in the classroom
- 📧 Taking time for YOU

NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES

Mary:
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Professional Development Opportunities

New Early Learning Standards are Coming!!!

Wait! Don't panic, they aren't new information, but they are a new layout. They are done in a magazine style format and are color coded.

The best news? They are only 40 pages long, which will make them much less cumbersome. They should be much easier to use in the classroom and hopefully will make using them in your lesson planning even more of a snap.

Additionally, Pennsylvania has finalized the Infant/Toddler standards in the same format. All staff in PEAK partner sites will be receiving a copy soon.

CDA Classes

Coming in the Fall

A CDA class is currently under development to be held in Pottstown for any staff working with Pottstown children. CDA is the nationally recognized Child Development Associate Credential. The certificate is obtained by completing 120 hours of coursework as well as completing an assessment component. Look for more details throughout the summer. If you have any questions about higher ed options or funding sources talk to your Director, PEAK PreK Coach or visit the www.pakeys.org website.

Contact Information:

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Literacy Activity for Pre-K

An activity to help children to learn the letters of their and their classmates names

ELS: L.1.4 "Develop an increasing understanding of letter knowledge"

Materials:

- ③ Photo of each child (with digital camera if available)
- ③ sentence strip paper, index cards, lined paper, and chart paper
- ③ writing materials including markers, pencils, chalk and chalk boards
- ③ glue sticks
- ③ alphabet manipulatives such as alphabet stamps, magnetic letters, alphabet sponges, alphabet blocks, alphabet stencils, and alphabet cookie cutters or dough stampers
- ③ clear contact paper

Remember to model for children how to write their name using both upper and lower case letters.

Objective: Children will write their own and their classmates' names using picture-word cues and a variety of alphabet manipulatives.

Procedure:

1. **Make Picture Name Tags.** Use children's individual photographs to create picture name cards to use for the classroom planning board, job chart, attendance chart, and different centers. Invite children to make their own during small group time. Write the names beside their photographs, then use

their name cards during circle time. Glue the child's picture onto the poster board, write their name, and cover with clear contact paper.

3. **Make another set of name cards for the writing area.** Provide alphabet magnets or individual letters and invite children to arrange the letters as they appear on the name cards. Add the children's names to the word wall so that children can refer to the spelling of their friends names throughout center play. Invite children to write the names with other various forms of media (paint, stamps, stencils, etc)

Books to extend the activity:

A My Name is Alice Jane E. Byer

A You're Adorable Buddy Kaye

I Spy Little Letters Jean Marzollo



Science Activities

During the dog days of summer nothing is more refreshing than water. Here are some science activities that can be done in small or large group with children that all have to do with water. The activities can be brought to the water table for children to experiment on their own. Make sure to incorporate scientific words like "experiment", "theory", "prediction" & "discovery" into the conversations.

(ELS: EL 1.6 "Use an increasingly complex and varied spoken vocabulary")

Will it dissolve?:

Fill five clear jars with water. Take five different substances, like sugar, cereal, salt, paper, things that will dissolve, and some that won't. Ask your child to predict which will dissolve, and which will not. Test each item in the water. (ELS: SC 3.2 "Demonstrate understanding of the process of Scientific Inquiry)

Will it absorb water? Supply the children with pieces of material to test like pieces of cotton, plastic, wool, tin foil, etc. Supply the children with eye droppers and a cup of water. Which materials absorb water and which

do not? (ELS: SC 3.2)

Evaporation- Set up a clothesline in your classroom. Talk with children about what happens when things get wet, then explain that when something dries, the water actually *evaporates*. Hang up wet clothing (doll clothes from the Dramatic Play ?) and have children observe how long it takes for them to dry. You can also have an evaporation race between items of differing weights- denim, cotton, etc. (ELS: SC 3.2)

Water Song: (tune of " I'm a Little Teapot")

I'm a drop of water in a pot,

I disappear when I get hot.

When I cool down I come right back,

And jump in the pot just like that!

Changing Temperatures-

Put warm water in one pitcher and ice cold water in another. Set out pitchers and several bowls. (This could be done in the water table) Let your children take turns combining water from both pitchers to make water that is a new temperature. How many different temperatures of water can they

make? If available, help your children use a kitchen thermometer to measure the temperature of the different water and record your findings. (ELS: SC 3.2)

Providing Sources of Water

Water in early childhood programs should not only be for drinking, washing up, or occasional play in the sensory table. Water should be made available for looking at, listening to, and touching as well as playing in and with. It is one of the most soothing and engaging substances that we can offer ourselves and children.

Think about adding rocks, shells, leaves or other natural materials or try adding a scent to the water table to enhance the children's sensory experience with water. (ELS: AL 1 "Demonstrate initiative and curiosity")

Summertime Fun

Ice Rainbow

Fill six ice cube trays with water, add a different food coloring to each tray and freeze. Fill your water table with water. Then let children play with different color combinations of ice cubes in the water. Or, you can put white paper in the tub instead of water and have children "paint" with ice cubes. Talk with children about what they think will happen to the ice, how will the color of the water change?, how does the ice feel?, talk about the difference between water as a liquid and a solid.

Making Lemonade

Explore children's sense of taste and the difference between sweet and sour as you make real lemonade.

- 1 Tablespoon grated lemon rind
- fresh squeezed juice of 9 lemons
- 5 cups cold water
- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 1 1/2 cups sugar



Combine the rind, juice and cold water & set aside

Combine boiling water and sugar and stir, combine with first mixture.

Serve over ice.

You can extend the literacy activity by drawing up direction cards.

Sun Safety for Children and You

Children should go outside early in the day *before* the heat index rises to 90°.

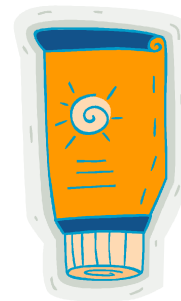
Protect yourself from the sun by wearing hats and covering exposed body parts (face, neck, arms)

Staff should wear sunglasses that block 100% of UV rays

Have children bring their own water bottles outside if there is no safe drinking water available while outdoors

Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before exposure not immediately before going outside

Teachers should model good sun protection by putting on suntan lotion and drinking water



Books for Summer

Use high quality children's literature for introducing lessons and focusing on specific instructional skills. After using the book during either large group or small group activities, include it in the library center for the children to use independently.

This Jazzman by Karen Ehrhardt and R.G. Roth

The mixed media illustrations in this lively take on "This Old Man" make for a great introduction to the world of Jazz for children. The refrain is especially enticing to children .

Mice and Beans by Pam Munoz Ryan

This beautifully illustrated book introduces many Spanish words and a number of aspects of the Latin culture to children. A fun and silly adventure that children are sure to enjoy.

Where Does Pepper Come From? By Brigitte Raab

A silly science book filled with interesting facts about animals set up in a guessing game format that children will quickly catch on to.



ABC BOOKS

Good alphabet books give exposure to younger children and reinforce concepts in more advanced children.

Alphabet Under Construction by Denise Fleming

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault

Eating the Alphabet by Lois Ehlert

Max's ABC by Rosemary Wells

Museum ABC The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Early Learning Standards- Using them in the Classroom

PEAK
Teacher Newsletter

Increasing Print Awareness in Preschoolers-
ELS: L1.1 & L1.5

Giving children a context for reading and writing is how early childhood educators begin the process of building lifelong readers. In order to help children understand the meaning and reason behind reading and writing teachers need to model various everyday literacy experiences. Talk to children about how you are making a note of something, referring to directions, posting a sign, looking up a phone number, etc. Because literacy is much more than learning to read books independently.

Printed names in the classroom. One of the most meaningful words for preliterate children is their own name. This can be incorporated into the classroom in various areas. Most classrooms have names on cubbies, but how about putting up a picture of each child with their family and all of their names written out? Or having children create a self portrait to be compiled in a classroom book to be placed in the library



placed in the
corner?

Family Connection: Invite parents to send in notes with children's lunches. You can set up a station by the parent communication center with notepaper, stickers and markers for parents to make their notes.

Remember books aren't only for the library area. Non-fiction books can be placed in the science area, books about transportation or buildings can go in the block area, there are some great math books that you can use in the math area, put lyrics/music books in the music area, and use some of the many gorgeous art books to inspire young artists.

FREE STUFF ALERT

Be the first teacher to email me a picture of your children doing something from this newsletter and win one of the Summer Books for your class!
ebaddeley@pottstownsd.org

What does an ELS look like in the classroom?

Example:

Early Learning Standard- " Demonstrate understanding of the process of scientific inquiry" SC 1.1

How to encourage this in the classroom?-
Provide a variety of enticing materials, setting up scientific experiments for children to try and welcoming children's questions are all ways to stimulate children's natural curiosity. Ask open ended questions, such as, "What do you think will happen if.....?"

How does the child demonstrate this in the classroom?

Beginning steps- Child tries out various materials through more trial and error and with intent and purpose without asking many questions

Intermediate steps- child responds to teacher's suggestions and open ended questions to try other ways of using materials and may ask questions

Mastery- child initiates other ways of using materials or changing results and may ask many questions.

Take Time for YOU

In order to maintain all of the patience, kindness, sense of humor and energy you need in order to be an effective Early Childhood Educator you have to take the time to take care of yourself.

The best way to prevent burnout is to understand what stress does to your body and have an effective plan in place for dealing with stress. First begin by taking good care of yourself- make sure you eat breakfast in the morning, get enough sleep at night and get some form of physical activity every day.



Some relaxation techniques that can be helpful:

Deep Breathing- breathe in for 5 counts, hold, and out for 5 counts. Repeat several times

Visualization/Meditation: Take a few minutes each day to be alone and visualize a soothing scene, listen to some relaxing music or just be quiet.

Reflective Journaling: Many people find that keeping a journal is very therapeutic and helps them to be reflective and gain perspective on their situation.

Just do whatever works for you, each person is different. But learn to recognize the signs that you are under too much stress: headaches, stomach aches, change in attitude, excessive tiredness, etc. Once you are able to recognize the signs take a time out to get yourself back on track.

"When you find yourself stressed, ask yourself one question: Will this matter in 5 years from now?

If yes, then do something about the situation.

If no, then let it go." Catherine Pulsifer