

The Blossom + Newsletter

January 2012



Art

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Some Panda Friends painting their landscape pictures



We started off the month of January talking about Chinese New Year. We learned that fish are considered good luck, especially gold fish, so we made good luck gold fish to bring luck to the Seed! We painted paper plates yellow and decorated them with glitter. We used shiny pieces of paper to make fish scales. You can see these beautiful fish hanging all over the walls of the Blossom.

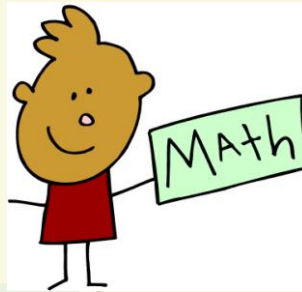
Some of the children made dragons and decorated them with glitter and small pieces of different colored papers. Others colored in dragon pictures using pastels and added glitter to them to make them "pop". This year is the Year of the Dragon, which is why we decided to decorate the Blossom with these mythical creatures!

Some of the children made red fish and decorated them with shiny paper, glitter, and small pieces of different colored construction paper. We chose the color red for these fish because it is believed to be good luck for the Chinese New Year.

In January we learned some new words in the art room. We discussed what a **landscape** is and what nature looks like when it is wintertime. Next, we painted a snowy sky to be the background for our winter landscape pictures. Many of us tried new techniques, such as **tinging** the paper by adding white to the blue sky. After our paint dried, we drew a tree with many branches. We used the letter "Y" to make our tree. Last, we added many details to our pictures. We looked out our window for inspiration and added many details, such as birds, squirrels, bird feeders, and acorns. This was a lot of work!! Your children worked very hard on these wonderful landscape art pictures! You can find these at the Blossom in the middle room bulletin boards. Enjoy!



The Seed: Where Children Blossom



Happy New Year, everyone! In the month of January, we introduced the children to the concepts of measurement, using a non-standard and standard measurement system. We started to work on non-standard measurement using yarn and string, blocks, cubes and other different objects. The children used these units to measure different items such as dolls, books, puzzles and so forth. They learned the corresponding vocabulary, such as, "This book is seven Unifix cubes long and five Unifix cube across."

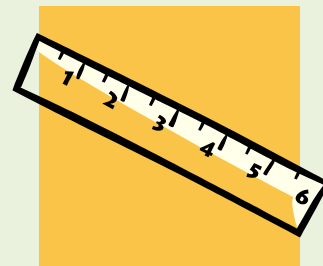
The children estimated the height of items such as a milk container, a tube, a big and small cup and an apple. We recorded their estimates on a chart and then measured the actual height of each using Unifix cubes. We used the chart to compare the actual numbers to the estimates.

Then the children measured each other's height using wooden building blocks. They used unit blocks (square in shape), double units (one rectangle = two units), and quads (the length of four unit blocks). The children were excited to discover how tall (or long) they are using these blocks to measure themselves and each other.

The children traced their own hands and feet and measured them with squares.

We also worked with standard measurements, using rulers, measuring tapes, measuring cups, measuring spoons and a scale. We discussed how, when and where to use these tools. The children measured different things with the ruler, such as the height of a doll, a stuffed animal, a car, and a book.

During the last week of January, we measured their long jump with a length of yarn and then with a measuring tape. They compared their long jump with those of their classmates to find out whose was the longest and whose the shortest.





Announcements



**Jaimee
Anna
Darin**



Español



Friends (*amigos*) are the main focus in Spanish class this month. The children are learning the difference between *un amigo* (one friend) and *muchos amigos* (many friends). Next the children will work with *mi amigo* (my friend), filling the human figure with the characteristics of each one's friend. We will display their work on the Spanish bulletin board.

Welcome back and Happy New Year. This month we started off January with a pop, for Chinese New Year. The children have been very interested in Chinese New Year and it has been a constant theme this month. We start off by reading books about Chinese New Year and then using what we saw to influence how we danced. For example, one of the books told how the lion dance took not just one person but many people working together and that took a lot of practice. The children got the idea that if they wanted their lion dance to include team work, they had to keep practicing and working as a team.

To continue with our Chinese New Year theme, the children enjoyed becoming the Yoga poses of the animals in the Chinese Zodiac. For example, we used the Downward Dog pose for Year of the Dog and the snake pose for Year of the Snake. For some of the animals in the zodiac, such as Dragon and Rooster, the children made up their own poses.

One of the children's favorite activities was to sing, dance and act out some of the Chinese New Year songs, such as "Lion Dance Song," "Dancing Dragon," "Show Ha Mo" and "Chinese New Year."

Obstacle courses have become another favorite activity for the children to do. Obstacle courses are a great way to work on coordination as the children weave in between the pillows or crawl through the tunnel. It builds balance as they walk across the balance beam or hop on one foot across the rug squares. The activities used in the obstacle course focus on building strength in different areas of the body.

Language Arts

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To begin the chilly month of January, we read the story *A Snowy Day*, by Ezra Jack Keats and some other winter stories as well. These stories inspired us to create a "Snowy Name Scene!" Every child was given small paper circles. The children were encouraged to write every letter of their name on a separate circle and then to create a face with the last circle. When the circles were lined up vertically, they formed their name and a snow person! The children enjoyed forming these snow people and decorating their "Snowy Name Scene."

To encourage and develop letter and word recognition, "Winter Words" have been displayed in the classroom. These words are Hat, Mitten, Snow, Scarf, Winter and Ice. The children are becoming more familiar with these words and the letters they start with. The older groups have even practiced writing some of these words!

During this month we have also concentrated on some books by Jan Brett. First we read *The Hat*. To enhance the experience we enacted a scene in the story when all the animals are wearing a different

article of clothing on their heads! Everyone enjoyed pretending to be a different animal from the story!

Next we read *The Mitten*. We used a real mitten and plastic animals from the story as props while reading it. It made the story come to life and enabled the children to become actively involved in the telling of the story. As a follow-up activity, the children were given a paper mitten and asked to share with their group what they would put inside their mitten. They had fun sharing their thoughts and generating ideas. These ideas were documented and are currently on display in the classroom.

The last book we read was *Annie and the Wild Animals*. After the story, play dough was provided along with plastic animals resembling the ones from the book. The children were encouraged to form animal tracks using the play dough. Snow white shaving cream was also used to promote letter formation



The Seed: Where Children Blossom



Science

Happy 2012, everyone! We started the new year in science class by gathering information about the weather and temperature outdoors. Among the data everyone could collect was: noticing that the air outside was cold, that many trees didn't have leaves, no flowers were blooming, some birds ate seeds from the birdfeeder, and children had to wear winter jackets, gloves, and hats when they went outside. All the information collected led the children to the conclusion that winter brought a lot of changes.

Once everybody was aware of the changes in weather, we started investigating about things that can happen in winter. How do winter storms form? What is a snowflake? What is a blizzard? Why does snow melt? Why do some animals hibernate in winter? All these questions were answered by doing different activities, such as reading books (*Animals in Winter*, *Ice* and *Snowstorms*) and by hands-on

experiments. To show the children a snowstorm, we used a box full of very small pieces of Styrofoam (pretend snow) and a hairdryer (to simulate wind) to make the snow blow inside the box.

To demonstrate that heat or high temperatures can melt snow, the children placed ice cubes into two transparent cups. They poured very warm water into the first cup and cold water into the second. They were able to observe that the warm water melted the ice faster but that, though the ice cube in the cup with cold water took longer, it did melt because the air in the room was warmer than it was.

In February, our scientists will be learning about dinosaurs! The idea came up after many children had visited the Natural History Museum in New York City. We predict we will have a lot of fun with this theme, so stay tuned!

