

# The Sunshine Room Newsletter

November



Page 1

## What's Been Happening

Celebrations continue in the Sunshine Room!

This month we celebrated the Muslim Eid-Al-Adha with Aiden, which takes place right after the time of pilgrimage to Mecca. As with other celebrations around the world, families get together to celebrate and children receive presents.

Preparing for Thanksgiving has been a great occasion to learn about being grateful for everything we have and for all those who care about us.

We also learned about the history of the Pilgrims and the Mayflower, and also about the Native Americans, including their way of life, traditions and legends.

We wrapped up our "feelings" unit and moved on to the *Peacemakers Program*. This is a conflict resolution program that teaches the children that they can be strong and powerful through cooperation and communication. They are taught these skills through songs, games and activity sheets, with the teachers' support and guidance.

## Index

Announcements: .....	Page 2
Art: .....	Page 2
Birthdays: .....	Page 2
Drama: .....	Page 3
Handwriting: .....	Page 4
Language Arts: .....	Page 1
Math: .....	Page 3
Science: .....	Page 4
Upcoming events: .....	Page 3
What's been happening: .	Page 1



## Language Arts

The children have finished working on all the letter sounds of the alphabet! Our final group of letters was the "hard workers", the letters that make words work: vowels! We have done a variety of activities devoted to learning each letter's short sound: practicing the sound and gesture in the *Zoo-phonics* way, creating word families, listening to stories containing just one word family (*Pat the Cat*, for example), playing word family ladder Bingo, coloring worksheets and tracing letters, reading *The Bug in the Jug Wants a Hug* (to listen for, read, and identify vowel sounds and rhymes), and making our own vowel hands (a hand cut-out with a vowel written on each finger). Now that the class has learned their vowels, when they practice writing words in Writer's Workshop later in the day, they are hearing many more sounds in the words they write, and there is a noticeable change in their sounding-out skills! Their sounding out of and writing of three-letter words has been reinforced with worksheets containing simple pictures (i.e., cat) and two rows of three jumbled letters, from which the children need to circle and draw lines connecting the three that spell the name of the picture, and then write the word on a line.

Towards the end of the month we returned to our readers and to practicing sight words. We read *A Monster Sandwich* and learned the words **put**, **some**, and **it**. In addition, we added the words **is**, **to**, **had**, and **has** - words we saw in short stories while practicing our vowels.

Besides identifying sight words embedded in text, the class also played Sight Words: Around the World, reading the list and spelling the words, and playing Sight Words Relay Race.

In December, we will review all the letters to solidify the children's knowledge of sounds and their ability to match upper and lowercase letters. We will continue reading short books, learning new sight words, practicing word building skills, sequencing stories, and enjoying some reading and writing of timely holiday stories! We can hardly believe the holidays are around the corner, and are looking forward to acknowledging them in language arts class.

# The Sunshine Room Newsletter

November



THE SEED DAY CARE CENTER  
where children blossom



Page 2



## Art



November was filled with many seasonal and artist-inspired projects, intricately created by the Sunshine Roomers' little hands. We worked on our painting, drawing, cutting and pasting skills by making an autumn-themed collage. After looking at illustrations by Eric Carle in *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, we made our own painted paper with piles of fun tools. We learned how to cut out shapes to create pumpkins and simple leaves, and then glued them to a sheet of our homemade purple paper.

Next, we continued our shape unit by learning about freeform shapes. We talked about the shapes that Henri Matisse used in his collages, and then drew our own freeform shapes. We chose either warm or cool colors to paint our shapes and filled them with all kinds of different lines.

Native American culture, symbol and pattern played a big role in our art projects during the second half of November. We learned that the Native Americans taught the Pilgrims how to plant Indian corn and that they used symbols to represent different things in nature. Tissue paper scrunching was a technique that we used again in an Indian corn project, which we displayed as a "cornfield" on our bulletin board. We used the Native American symbols and shape designs to decorate paper bag vests and headbands, which we wore during drama class.

To end the month, we learned about silhouettes, looking at photos of the black shapes of bare trees, houses, and other outdoor elements against a brighter sky. We used tissue paper to create a darkening autumn sky, and then layered cut-out black shapes on top to complete the scene. We will continue on into December by becoming experts at working with geometric shapes. We will create disc designs using diamonds, hearts, squares, circles, and maybe even trapezoids!

Happy  
Birthday!  
**Kaila**  
**Matthew**  
**Shrey**



# The Sunshine Room Newsletter

November



Page 3

## Drama



Drama is an important component of language arts, since it helps the children comprehend a story, use more complex language and develop their imaginations.

During November we focused on Native American legends. *The Legend of the Bluebonnet* is a beautiful tale of offering. The children listened to the story, chose parts, dressed up and used props to dramatize it. As usual, children are allowed to choose parts regardless of the characters' gender in the original story, since this requires minimal adaptation and gives everyone the opportunity to dramatize their favorite character. We also dramatized *Arrow to the Sun*, a tale of the search for self-identity.

The day before Thanksgiving, we dramatized *A Turkey for Thanksgiving*, a cute story with a surprise ending about animals looking for a turkey for their Thanksgiving table. That day we also had a Thanksgiving feast. We placed the tables in a row, decorated them, set the food and our homemade cornbread in the middle, and all joined in a family-style meal, even the teachers. What fun!

## Math



The beginning of November was dedicated to extending the learning about patterns. What children see and hear when they encounter patterns is the raw material for drawing inferences and solving problems. Children will apply this knowledge of patterns when they study odd and even numbers, skip-counting, and throughout their math studies. The children learned to identify the pattern unit, the group of objects that repeats over and over. To conclude the theme, the children were challenged to create their own unique patterns using a variety of colored shapes. They did so in linear and circular ways, discovering symmetry in their designs as well as patterns.

Preliminary to counting and numbers are the concepts of equal, more and fewer. One-to-one correspondence is a one-to-one mapping between two groups, with each element in the first group being made to correspond with exactly one element in the second group and vice versa. The understanding of this concept will be fundamental to future learning. When comparing groups, children need to focus on the number of objects rather than their size. To this purpose, the children learned to use a graph to align object and compare quantities.

In December the children will be learning to count accurately, recognize numbers 0 to 10, that numbers follow an order, and developing flexibility in their number sense.

As usual the children are always encouraged to apply math in daily life, such as counting the days in school.

## Upcoming Events

**Holiday Show:**   
**December 23 at 4:00**

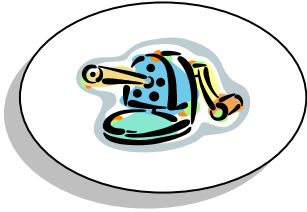
# The Sunshine Room Newsletter

November



Page 4

## Handwriting



We spent the month learning a new group of letters called “Center Starters.” Rather than starting at the top left-hand corner of our chalkboards, we learned that they start at the *top center* (a vocabulary phrase reinforced by the teacher as she demonstrated where this is on the chalkboard).

The first four letters we learned are called “Magic C” letters, because one needs to write “C” in order to form other letters. The letters are C (of course), O, Q, and G. After that, we learned five more “Center Starter” letters: S, A, I, T, and J. These letters were the last of the uppercase letters we had left to learn!

The kindergartners also started using their workbooks. They began by learning to write their names on lines, which involved a small taste of sizing upper and lowercase letters (more on that later this year). Next they practiced their pencil grasp by performing small motor movements drawing swirls, lines, and circles. Finally, we reviewed F, E, D, P, B, and R.

In December, we will take a break from letters and learn to write numerals 1-10. This will help the children tremendously as they learn counting in math! And of course, we will continue reviewing in the workbook.

## Science

The Sunshine Roomers began learning all about their incredible human bodies, inside and out. We began our unit on the human body by completing a life-size tracing of each child’s body. Each week, the children add new parts of the body onto their drawing, representing what we learned that week in science. When we’re all done, the children will have a life-size representation of what their very own body looks like!

The children began by learning all about the visible body, including learning to appreciate the ways we are alike and different. We read *We Are All Alike*. . . *We Are All Different* and explored part of *The Giant Book of the Human Body*, which discussed how we grow. To round out our study of the visible body, we read *Why Did I Lose My Teeth?* The children were excited to learn that their grown-up teeth are hiding in their gums, and soon the entire class was sharing stories of their trips to the dentist and showing their teeth off to their classmates. We also sang “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” for some body-related fun!

We sang our way through the skeletal system by learning the words to “Dem Bones” and moving our skeletons along to the music. We also read *Dry Bones, Why Did My Bone Break?* and continued to read *The Giant Book of the Human Body*. We learned that our muscles and joints, together with our skeleton, are what make our bodies move. The children each had a chance to investigate a skeleton and guess how many bones were in our body. We learned that there are 206!

With Thanksgiving approaching, we focused on the digestive system and nutrition. We followed the path food takes through our body, taking time to learn about our stomach, small and large intestine, and all the parts inside our mouths. We learned all about the food pyramid and the importance of eating healthy foods, including reading *Why Do I Need to Eat Fruits and Veggies?* Everyone loved climbing aboard the Magic School Bus to watch a video on what happens with what you eat *For Lunch*. In light of all they learned, the Sunshine Roomers baked cornbread for their classroom Thanksgiving feast—delicious!

Not only are the children scientists, they are also rappers! To learn about the circulatory system the children learned and performed “Rappin’ Heart Rhyme.” The children learned that the heart never stops working and will beat about two billion times during their lifetime! The children also had a chance to listen to their pulses, both with their fingers and using a stethoscope. Along with the heart, the children learned that the lungs are also very important in delivering oxygen to our blood. We read about “Why You Breathe” from *The Giant Book of the Human Body*.

The children are enjoying learning about what makes their bodies special and have been seen playing games of doctor, making x-ray machines out of Tinker Toys, and using the felt body parts during free play. In December we will continue our exploration of the human body, with a focus on the nervous system, germs, and healthy habits.