

The Sunshine Room Newsletter

December 2010

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What's been happening?

This exciting December began with Hanukkah, which we followed day by day as the candles were lit at home until the full menorah shone on the last night. Then, we started counting the days until Christmas. Through the books *A Letter to Santa* and *The Jolly Christmas Postman*, the children learned the conventions of writing a letter. Then they wrote their letters to Santa during writers' workshop. What a great incentive to write!

We also had special visitors. Ms. Heidi Fraser, Nicholas' mom, came to teach the children what a molecule is. She used Styrofoam balls and pipe cleaners to build different models so the children could see how a water molecule is different from a carbon dioxide one, for example. Then, they did the same thing using gummy bears. It was a lot of fun!

Ms. Amy Puerto, Allie's mom, came to share a Christmas tradition: making pizza! The children helped season the tomato sauce, spread it on the pizza and put the mozzarella on top. Finally, they ate it all up. It was delicious!

The holiday season culminated with the holiday show. The children worked hard while having fun preparing for it. They performed for the children in the school and finally for their families. What a great show it was!

Language Arts



December was a month of lots of review. We have learned a lot already and need to continue practicing and using what we have learned to keep it fresh in our minds so that we can build on.

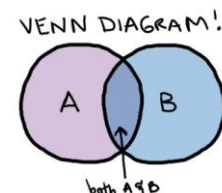
The children have been reviewing and practicing vowel sounds and rhymes to reinforce the concept of how vowels and consonants work together to create words. They have also done word-building activities – looking at pictures and writing the words, putting letters together to create a word, creating words with letter cubes, and making words with letter cards connected by pictures.

We also made connections between books and our lives, books and other books, and books with science. We even used a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast two books and will continue to learn about similarities and differences.

The children also created their own dictionaries. These dictionaries will be used as a reference for words of their choice. We have added some holiday words so far, but will be adding more as the children come up with words that they would like to learn how to spell. The children draw little icons to help them remember what each word says.

Finally, the children began working on sequencing. They listened to stories and discussed the order of the story and put pictures from the story in order. They also practiced with sequence cards, placing them in the order that made the most sense.

All of these concepts will be continued throughout the school year.



Announcements

**The Seed will be
CLOSED**

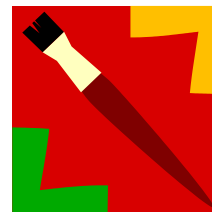
Monday, January 17
Martin Luther King,
Jr. Day



Ryan



ART



The class continued working on and completed their original self-portraits. They are displayed in the classroom by and over the windows. They look amazing!

Throughout the month, the children worked hard on their holiday jar gifts for their families. It was nice to hear who they were making their gifts for: some made them for their parents, while others made them for their siblings. Noah's mom brought us lots of bendaroos, which added a special touch to the jars. Thank you!

The children made wreaths, Christmas carolers and Santas, based on what the children celebrate. They used paper towel and toilet tissue rolls, and then they decorated them. They all looked so cute.

Finally, the children helped create and make their masks, and the props needed for the holiday show. They all had so much fun creating their holiday crafts, and worked extra hard for their holiday show! This has all put us in the holiday spirit!!

As usual, the children had an extra activity at the sensory table during art time. Some days it is playing with sand, others playing with moon sand, others playing with playdough or gak. The children had a great time the day it snowed, because the teacher put snow in the sensory table so they children could play with it. It was really fun!

Handwriting

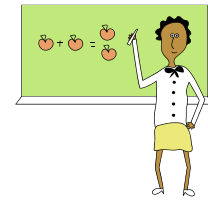


This month's handwriting lessons tied into the current math explorations. The children learned how to write the numbers 1-10, and understand that all of those numbers appear in and make up all other numbers. The children particularly enjoyed learning to write the numbers 5, 8 and 9 thanks to the silly stories that accompanied the explanations behind the formation of the numbers.

The kindergartners also began using their handwriting workbooks this month. Each lesson, they reviewed two or three uppercase letters they had learned earlier in the year. For the month of December, they practiced their "Frog Jump" letters: F, E, D, P, B, R, N and M. The pre-k's also got involved by writing the letters on paper and drawing a picture of an object that begins with those letters. All of the children continued to develop small muscles in their hands by coloring in pictures accompanying the letters.

In January, all of the children will begin the most challenging characters of all: lowercase letters!

Math

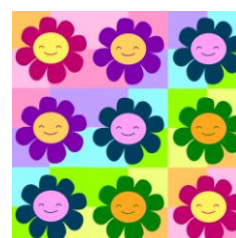


In December the children completed the second and final month where counting, number recognition and sequencing were emphasized and focused on. We explored number recognition in many ways. First, the teacher laid out numbers in order with several numbers missing from the line. The children were responsible for identifying the missing numbers, locating them among a disordered pile of numbers and placing them in the proper place in line. The numbers 1-30 were used for this challenging activity.

The concepts of more, fewer and equal were also explored by playing with red, white and blue counters. The book *A-Counting We Will Go* was used to develop one-to-one correspondence, which was also practiced in writing numbers and drawing a corresponding group of objects. Writing numbers was a strong focus in this month's workbook activities as well.

Sequencing was practiced by completing and coloring in holiday-themed connect-the-dots worksheets, and graphing was also touched on lightly. Finally, the children learned ordinal numbers (first, second, third, etc.) by lining up Unifix cubes and identifying where in line specific colored cubes belonged. The children also played a game where they themselves were the Unifix cubes, and had to identify who was where in line based on certain characteristics (Who is the tallest? Who is wearing stripes? What color is the third person's hair? The fifth child should switch places with the first child.). The children particularly enjoyed this part of the activity!

In January the children will begin learning about solid figures, 2D shapes and their characteristics (curves, sides and corners) and symmetry!



Drama



During this month the children prepared their plays for the show.

The teacher presented winter stories by Jan Brett to the groups. These stories are based on traditional tales and take place in different parts of the world. *The Three Snow Bears* is taken from *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. It is set in Alaska with an Inuit girl and three polar bears that live in an igloo. *Trouble with Trolls* takes place in Northern Europe. In our adaptation we exchanged the skis for a snowboard, which delighted the children. The last story was *The Mitten*; however, fitting many children in a mitten proved beyond our creativity, so we decided to exchange it for the similar traditional Eastern European tale *Fly's Castle*, in which several animals hide until a polar bear wants to come in...The children immediately liked the stories and chose their parts. The teacher adapted the plays so that everyone would have a few lines and an important part. We built the set and made the masks, got a few costumes from the costume box, and a teacher brought in a snowboard made for children. The children learned their lines, places on the stage and rehearsed until they got it down really well. Most of all, they had lots of fun.

Science



During the month of December we focused on the four seasons and weather. We began by talking about what we know. We discussed how the different seasons feel, smell, look, feel and sound – incorporating the five senses. The children also described what clothes are appropriate for each season. Then we moved on to temperature and did experiments using hot and cold (ice) water. We continued with cold weather changes such as why the leaves change and why it snows, and even made our own snow! Then we learned about rain and rainbows while making our own rainbows. Next... storms! We learned about storms such as thunderstorms and tornadoes. Finally, we learned about wind and reviewed what we learned throughout the unit.

We were also very fortunate to have Heidi Fraser come in to teach us about molecules! The children had fun building their own model molecules with Styrofoam balls and with gummy bears. A big thanks to Heidi!