

The Sunshine Room Newsletter

December



Page 1

What's Been Happening

December is such a happy month, full of celebration and good feelings. This is the spirit in which we continued our Peacemakers Program. The lesson "Hands" taught the children useful ways to employ their hands and that hands are not for hurting. The lesson "Nice Words" taught the children that if we want to hear nice words from others, we also have to say nice words. Children's interactions become more meaningful when they learn to use their bodies and their words well.

The children worked very hard learning the songs, dances and plays for the holiday show, and they did a great job. What a wonderful show!

Thank you all for coming!

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

This month we reviewed letter and sound recognition. We matched upper- and lowercase letters, played Word Family Ladder Bingo, played the Short Vowel Sounds game, sounded out three-letter words, and read the rhyming/word family book *Stop, Drop, and Flop in the Slop*.

We continued our sight word review by reading the list, spelling out the words, playing Sight Word Relay, and playing Sight Word Scramble. We added additional sight words to the list, too: **want, man, he, made, yes, you, so, will, be, and as**. Our new sight words came from reading the books *I Want Ice Cream, A Cat's Day, Snowman, Little Brother, and Painting*, and the poems "Hanukkah Latke" and "Christmas Happiness."

The children also practiced sounding out the words on their worksheets. This skill was honed by putting together letter blocks (using pictures as a guide), filling in word pattern practice cards (working with a peer to think of as many words in a word family as they could in a five-minute period), and building words using a puzzle.

Sequencing was another skill which we began exploring in order to learn that stories have a beginning, middle and end. To understand this idea better, we put wordless sequence cards in order to determine what constitutes a beginning, middle and end. After having read *Little Brother* multiple times, the children had a firm grasp on the order of the story, so we used the *Little Brother* sequence cards at first to help us feel successful at sequencing. Next, the teacher read "The Three Little Pigs," followed by having the class help her arrange cards for that well-known story. Finally, they played with sequence cards for unfamiliar stories to really challenge themselves.

The week of Hanukkah and Christmas was spent reading holiday-themed stories such as *Merry Christmas, Strega Nona* and *The Night Before Christmas*. We discussed what we heard in the book and then used sequence cards to test our comprehension of the story. For fun, we wrote our own original Christmas, Hanukkah, and holiday acrostic poems.

We will return to sequencing when school begins again in 2012.

Happy New Year, everyone!

The Sunshine Room Newsletter

December



Page 2

Art



Although we have yet to see the first real winter snow of the season, the Sunshine Room has been filled with plenty of snowy projects this December! We eased into this month by finishing off our last piece of autumn art, sunset silhouettes. The kids worked very hard to create their fiery skies, layering warm-colored tissue paper to create a fade effect. They added bare trees, houses, horses, and many other objects in silhouette. The finished products looked especially impressive hanging in the windows where the sun could shine through them.

Next, we cruised through a mandala project, which will be hung up after the New Year—the room was just so full of beautiful holiday work that there was no space for this one! The students learned about symmetry and reviewed geometric shapes to make colorful, circular designs. We used our knowledge of mandalas later in the month to create one of the components of our parent ornament.

The kids worked for many days to complete the ornament's faces, which included the mandala, a watercolor resist snowy night scene, a fingerprint holiday wreath, and a set of their handprints to capture how little they are in this kindergarten year. Not only did they have fun creating these pieces, they also learned about different painting and drawing techniques in the process.

To showcase just how amazing their skills are becoming, the students cut intricate snowflakes from specially folded paper, covering the windows with a delicate white screen. Their new-found motor skill finesse was also seen in complicated beaded stars, which decorated the room with twinkling holiday cheer. We can't wait to see what they will be able to do when January comes around!



Happy Birthday!



Sonia, Paige,
Kylie and
Grace

The Sunshine Room Newsletter

December



Page 3

Drama



Drama class this month was all focused on the holiday show. The story *A Turkey for Thanksgiving* is a fun story with a surprise ending. It also has eight characters, which made it perfect for one of the groups. Although Thanksgiving has passed, we know that turkeys are used in other holiday cooking, so we adapted the story into a play we call *A Turkey for the Holidays*.

The Legend of the Bluebonnet is a Native American story about the Comanche People, and it takes place in what is now Texas. It is a powerful tale of a girl who makes a sacrifice for the good of her people.

Fly's Castle is a Russian story that one of the teachers' heard from a storyteller. The winter theme renders it perfect for this time of the year.

The children had a great time dressing up, making masks, using props, and learning their lines and how to move on stage, all important components of drama. What made it all the more special was to perform before a supportive audience, which was made up of families and friends.

Math



Math classes were focused on the numbers 1 to 10, counting, and gaining a deeper understanding of what numbers are.

Classes began with the reading of poems for different numbers from the book *Can You Count It Out, Jesse Bear?* We followed the poems with the reading of other literature, such as *A Feast for 10*. During Shared Reading time, the children engaged in reading *The Ants Go Marching* as well as other books that are variations on the same song.

Numbers always follow the same order. To reinforce this, the teacher constructed a number line on the floor and asked the children to jump, tip-toe, or walk to certain numerals.

Using a variety of counters, the children practiced counting, emphasizing accuracy. When children count, they should be aware that as they name each number, they should point to one and only one object.

Our mathematicians used Unifix cubes to explore numbers in a variety of ways, and were able to visualize how, for example, four is one more than three. It is also one less than five, and it can be represented as three and one, or two and two. This flexibility in children's thinking leads to the development of a solid number sense.

The last week we played the dreidel game, a fun way to use math.

Upcoming Events

2012-2013 Kindergarten Open House

Saturday, January 21

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



The Sunshine Room Newsletter

December

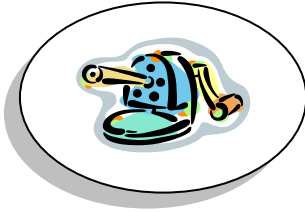


THE SEED DAY CARE CENTER
where children blossom



Page 4

Handwriting



Handwriting class really came in handy this month, because we needed to know how to write numbers for Ms. Diane in math class. We learned to write numbers 1-10 using the wet-dry-try method and a couple of funny, memorable stories to help us with tricky numbers like 5 (really a bald man) and 9 (a stubborn number who refuses to start in the top left-hand corner like most of the other numbers). We also practiced making circles (starting at the top and going counter-clockwise, or in a magic C) to remind us to start at the top and in which direction to make our magic C letters. At the beginning of class, we would “sign in” on the board by circling our first initials.

The kindergartners have continued reviewing uppercase letters in their workbooks, finished the frog jump letters and moved on to letters H, K, and L. The pre-kindergartners continue building letters with wooden pieces on letter cards.

When we come back in January, we will start with our biggest challenge yet: lowercase letters!

Science



December had the Sunshine Room scientists continuing their study of the human body. We started the month off by learning about our body’s control center- the brain! We learned that our brain is responsible for helping us think, feel, and for controlling all the other parts of the body. We read “How You Think and Feel” from *The Giant Book of the Human Body* and examined a model of the human brain. We also played the “Brain Game” to learn how our brain uses nerves to send and receive messages.

From the brain, we moved on to germs. The children learned that germs are everywhere and they can make us sick! To recognize how germs are spread and what we can do to stay healthy, we read *Germs Make Me Sick!* We learned about two main types of germs, bacteria and viruses. The Sunshine Roomers had the opportunity to explore a model of a bacterium and one of a virus. We also had a chance to look at a slideshow with real pictures of germs like those which cause flu, Lyme disease, and strep throat. Sick! At movie time, we watched *The Magic School Bus: Inside Ralphie* to see what it looks like from the inside when your body is fighting germs. The children discovered our body has natural defenses like white blood cells and antibodies to protect us.

The week of our big holiday show, we took a break from learning about our bodies so that we could cook some tasty treats. The Hedgehogs made apple matzo kugel, a variation of a traditional Jewish dish, while the Digging Meerkats and the Gray Parrots both made ginger cookies. Winter wonderful!

In January, we will wrap up our unit on the human body with a lesson on healthy habits. The Sunshine Room scientists will then turn their attention to the skies and learn about weather and the seasons.