

The Sunshine Room Newsletter

September 2010

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What's been happening?

Welcome to the school year
2010-2011!

We began the year by getting to know each other and making new friends. We then emphasized the importance of following safety rules. Finally, the children decided together what the classroom rules would be. In a period of over a week they came up with these:

1. Listen and follow directions
2. Play safely
3. Take care of things
4. Kindness
5. Respect

The children are also learning proper hand washing and why it is so important to wash our hands.

The Jewish holidays and the Asian Moon Festival were great opportunities to incorporate other cultures into the curriculum. The children even tried challah bread (courtesy of Evan and his family) and Chinese moon cakes (courtesy of Sophia and her family).

What's coming up?

Our Halloween Show! The children will prepare songs, dances and more. The show will take place on Friday, October 29, at 4:00.

The children can bring their costumes in a marked bag.

Come and enjoy!

Language Arts



This year has started off great! The children are very excited to learn how to read, and enthusiasm is a great motivator in this challenging process.

So far, the children have learned to read three books, *Go, Go, Go* by June Melser, *A Party* by Joy Cowley, and *Chinese Kites* by Rebel Williams. These are all a part of the Storybox collection. The words on each page match what the pictures show to get the students started on learning how to read. However, we also have gone over differentiating between what is a word and what is a letter. The children know that spaces come between words. We make a point of counting how many words are on a page so that I know they understand what a word is.

Using words from the books that we are reading, we have started forming a "Words we know" list, and a list of sight words. The list will continue to grow throughout the year as the children become familiar with more and more words.

We have also been focusing on specific sounds that are related to the book we are reading. The children learn the letter name, hard sound (C for cat, G for gorilla), a Zoophonics character and a motion that is associated with the character. This helps the children to be more involved, move around and makes learning more fun.

Another way that the children learn and practice the letter sounds is by using the "Mystery Box." The mystery box is filled with items that begin with the sounds that they are currently learning. Each child has a turn to pull out an item and decide which sound that object begins with.

Announcements

September Birthday



Noah

Spanish

¡Hola! ¿Cómo les va?

(Hello! How are you?)

It is the beginning of the year and the children are starting by learning some new songs, such as “Mama pata” (“Mother Duck”), “De la cabeza a los pies” (“Head to Toe”) and others.

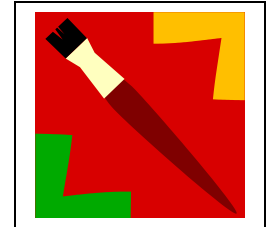
The children know how to say “Buenos Días” (“Good Morning”) very well.

The children are also learning about food and manners. If they want milk, they say, “Leche, por favor,” and “Gracias” when they are served.

The children are also practicing saying the numbers in Spanish, and the first letter of their names.

¡Hasta luego! (So long!)

ART



This year, the children are fortunate to have 3 teachers working with them on art projects, allowing for many opportunities to create different works of art made of all sorts of materials!

With Ms. Randi, the children dedicated the beginning of the month to designing their first initials with any color paints they desired – it was all about them! Next, to connect to current and future handwriting lessons, the entire class helped paint the whole alphabet a whole rainbow of colors, which is displayed over the window above the cubbies. It serves double duty: it looks great, and is also a reference for the children when identifying uppercase letters! Finally, to tie in to Ms. Kristin’s science curriculum on the five senses (using their sense of touch), the children each created their own original marble paper using shaving cream and liquid watercolor paint.

With Ms. Torri and Ms. Diane, the children colored paper T-shirts, wrote their names and glued them on it. Then, the teacher traced their hands which they colored as well. They finally cut the T-shirt out and glued it with the hands on colored paper. Now on display: all the Sunshine Room children holding hands.

In celebration of the Asian Moon Festival, the children constructed their own dragon kites. This was hard work, but the children enjoyed every minute of it.

After learning the story of Johnny Appleseed, and observing the different colors in apples, the children used apple cores and apple pieces to make apple prints. They all collaborated in making the bulletin board with Johnny Appleseed and an apple tree.

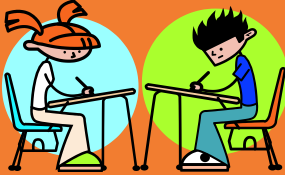
Every day the children also engage in their own free art using play dough, gak, flubber, moon sand, watercolors, pastels, or paint, all interesting ways to explore the sense of touch.

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Handwriting



The month of September was devoted to learning the routine of handwriting class: “signing in” on a dry-erase board (identifying first initials, and learning proper pencil grip), singing the song, “Where Do You Start Your Letters?” (you have probably overheard your child singing it at home!), learning to write 2-3 letters on a slate (first with teacher demonstration, tracing with a sponge and then a paper towel, then finally writing the letter independently), then using wooden pieces to form the letters on laminated letter cards. The time is also used to reinforce current and future literacy lessons by reviewing letter sounds and identifying words that start with the letters being learned that day.

The children are learning to write through the *Handwriting without Tears* curriculum, which uses many different modes of learning so that all different learners can benefit from the program. So far, the children have done very well and can now all write the letters F, E, D, P, B, R, M and N using the *Handwriting without Tears* vocabulary!

Math



This year’s class is full of math whizzes! All of the children have really been excelling!

Week 1 we spent learning directionality. For this, the children used different manipulatives as well as their own bodies. The children learned above and below, over and under, in and out, and left and right. The children all especially enjoyed learning left and right, during which the teacher placed stickers on the children’s left hands, then had them identify in the book *Beach Ball – Left, Right* (by Bruce McMillan) whether the beach ball was on the left or the right. Everyone, pre-Ks included (who showed much enthusiasm, though left/right is not a part of NY’s pre-K math curriculum), displayed their understanding of the concept! Excellent job!

Next, the children learned about classification. The children are now able to sort objects by color, size and/or shape. After learning classification, the children moved on to shapes – they reviewed previously learned shapes, such as circle, square, rectangle, triangle, star, heart, oval and diamond, and learned new shapes: pentagon, hexagon and parallelogram. The children also got to play a version of Bingo using shapes to further their understanding.

Finally, the children worked on numbers by counting, completing puzzles, writing numbers, and learning one-to-one correspondence.

On Fridays, the children get to build with blocks. It is an opportunity to learn to share, negotiate space and gain a further understanding of spatial relationships.

It has indeed been a busy month in the world of math! In October, the kindergartners will begin working on their math workbooks. Stay tuned!

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Drama

Our first activity was to use finger puppets to dramatize safe playing. The teacher did it first and then the children were encouraged to pair up and come up with their own story.

After reading the book *I Am Caring*, the children used puppets to dramatize a way of caring for others.

As a way of learning about other cultures, we read the story *Dragon Kite of the Autumn Moon*. After the reading, the children picked roles to dramatize the story: they could be the sick grandparent, the child or the kite. Since they wanted to try the different roles, they dramatized the story several times. The children took to acting immediately, and enjoyed pretending to be someone else. This also gave them the opportunity to delve into the story and comprehend it more completely. The next day, they were thrilled to make their own dragon kites in art.

We will continue to use drama as a literature extension and as self-expression.



Science

The children are on their way to becoming little scientists! The first day was spent discussing what science is and what topics in science we would like to explore. Each group came up with spectacular lists on intriguing subjects such as outer space, sea animals, dinosaurs, how we move, gravity and more. We have an interesting science curriculum to look forward to.

However, science is hard to study without using our five senses. So, to begin our transformation into scientists, we began the year with a unit on the five senses. Each Friday we learned about one or two of our senses and practiced using them by sorting and classifying. We sorted shells by color, shape and size using our eyesight. We sorted items inside opaque containers and shook them, using our ears to hear what could be inside. We used taste and smell to decide what certain foods or items were. And we used our hands to feel and sort items by how they felt.