

The Sunshine Room Newsletter

September



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What's Been Happening

Welcome to the new school year! It is just starting and what a wonderful time we've had so far! The children have adapted fast and easily to the new environment and routine.

The first social learning activity was to make our classroom rules together:

1. I can say "please" and "thank you"
2. I can work with others
3. I can be a good friend
4. I can be fair
5. I can listen
6. I can show respect
7. I can share

Social learning takes place every day, in our interactions with each other and in respect for each other's culture.



Language Arts

Welcome to Language Arts! In the first month of school alone, the children have already learned to read four books, identify the names/sounds of 15 letters of the alphabet, and locate and read nine sight words in the books and poems they see each day in class.

We spent our first day of school viewing pictures and videos of various animals found in Africa to help us choose the three class group names for the school year. After much deliberation, the groups are proud to announce that they are the Digging Meercats, the Hedgehogs, and the Gray Parrots.

Each week we have read one book and focused on a group of letters found in that book and/or in an accompanying poem posted on the wall. We spent Week One of school reading *Go, Go, Go* and focused on the letter G, which is represented by our Zoo-phonics friend, Gordo Gorilla.

During week Two we read *Chinese Kites* (in honor of the Chinese Moon Festival), the poem "Mooncake," and studied letters H, K, R, S, and T, along with Zoo-phonics friends Honey Horse, Kayo Kangaroo, Robbie Rabbit, Sammy Snake, and Timothy Tiger, respectively.

During Week Three we read *A Party* as well as a poem by the same title. We concentrated on letters B, C, D, and P, and Zoo-phonics friends Bubba Bear, Catina Cat, Dee-Dee Deer, and Petey Penguin.

And during Week Four we read *The Chocolate Cake* and "Autumn Leaves." The letters we learned about were F, J, L, M, and N, with friends Francy Fish, Jerry Jellyfish, Lizzy Lizard, Missy Mouse, and Nigel Night Owl.

The sight words we have learned are **a, for, and, on, I, go, the, said,** and more. Next time you read with your child, try going on a "sight word search" for these words! As your child has learned, sight words are words that appear frequently in text.

To strengthen knowledge of letter sounds, the children played Mystery Box and Around the World, and completed one worksheet per letter, which can be found in your child's personal file. You can view their progress and practice letter sounds at home!

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Announcements

Halloween Show in the Sunshine Room!

We invite all families to our Halloween Show on Friday, October 28, 2011 at 4:30 p.m. The children will sing songs, dance, and perform plays all related to Halloween, followed by a costume fashion show.

Please send your child with his or her costume in a marked bag. Feel free to contribute refreshments to serve after the show.



Happy
Birthday!
Christa McAuliffe
Grandma Moses

Art



This year we have a new art teacher in the Sunshine Room! Her name is Miss Angela and she began the month of September by helping us to show the class what kind of artists we are. We have drawn in crayon and colored pencil, painted with watercolor and made a collage, all expressing what kinds of lines, shapes, colors, and subjects we like to use as artists. To help us see how people working in the same medium are vastly different, we have looked at paintings and collages by Vincent Van Gogh, Georges Seurat, Cy Twombly, Claude Monet, Henri Matisse and Wangechi Mutu. We talked about how each artist uses their art materials in unique ways.

In the past week, we have learned about and used all kinds of lines. Straight, wiggly, curly, and zigzag lines have made appearances in many of our artworks. We also tackled the concept of line orientation: how lines can sit vertically, horizontally or diagonally on the page.

To relish in the changing seasons, we have tried out some different painting and cutting techniques to make autumn trees and collages. We made our own paper, using the work of Eric Carle as inspiration and we tried out sponge-painting instead of using the same old paintbrush. To end the month of September, and incorporate some science, we used our knowledge of the five senses and emotions to create amazing self portraits. Some of our portraits showed surprise, others wore a simple smile, but all of them were sensational!



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Drama



We have Drama once a week and it is something the children look forward to. In our first drama class, the children used puppets to express their feelings about the first day of the school year in the Sunshine Room.

The Asian Lunar Festival happened to fall in the second week, so we read *Dragon Kite of the Autumn Moon*, a Korean tale, and we dramatized it. The children had such a good time that they did it several times, changing parts.

We explored social awareness by making up stories in which the puppets followed one of the concepts learned in the various books we'd been reading: *I Can Cooperate*, *I Can Listen*, *I Can Be a Good Friend*, *I Can Be Fair*, and *I Have Good Manners*.

We explored emotional awareness by reading the book *Glad Monster, Sad Monster* and changing our expressions to show different emotions.

Finally, to the children's great excitement, we have started preparing our plays for the Halloween Show. The children will perform in their Halloween costumes, having adapted the plays to them.

Math



The children have Math class three days a week. The teacher introduces the concept with a book and follows with a demonstration, engaging the children in their own learning. Then the children have a chance to explore the concept on their own using manipulatives. Finally, they demonstrate to the teacher what they have learned through an assessment activity.

This month we reviewed basic shapes and colors and learned new shapes. The children used shapes magnets and tangrams to construct their own unique design. We also reviewed numbers 1 to 10, counting, and one-to-one correspondence. This last concept is fundamental in children's cognitive development, and they practiced it using counters and number mats. They had a great time doing this, since they really like the counters.

We officially began the Math program by introducing positions and directionality, such as in and out; left and right. We did this by reading *Rosie's Walk* and pretending to be Rosie the hen, following the teacher's instructions to walk "across the room," "under the table" and so forth. Finally, the children started using their math workbooks, a *very* exciting moment. You could hear them saying such things as "I love you, Workbook!" and even kissing it. It is their step into kindergarten, a confirmation that they are now big children. What could be more exciting?

Upcoming Events

Halloween Show: **October 28 at 4:30** 



Picture Day: **November 8**

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



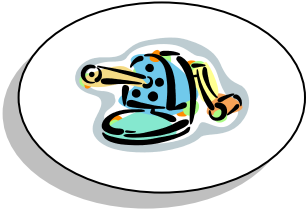
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Handwriting



“Ribbit, ribbit!” The Sunshine Roomers have spent the month of September learning to write a family of letters called “Frog Jump Letters.” In this family there are eight letters: F, E, D, P, B, R, M, and N. They are referred to as “Frog Jump Letters” because they all start the same way: Begin at the top with a big line down, then frog jump back to the top. Depending on the letter, the next step may be to make a big curve, a little curve, a little line, or a big line. To reinforce sequencing of the steps followed to produce one of these letters, the children have all had a chance to play the “Mystery Letter Game.”

Also to reinforce where to start letters (“At the top!”, as the children are learning), they have learned to sing a song called “Where Do You Start Your Letters?” (to the tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know it”) Chances are, you have heard your child sing this song! Older siblings who were once Sunshine Roomers may even be heard singing along!

In October we will be starting to learn more uppercase letters which, sadly, are not in a family of their own, yet are still unique!

Science



The Sunshine Room scientists started the year learning about their five senses. The children began by identifying the five senses and the parts of the body that relate to each sense. To reinforce the concepts, we read *My Five Senses*, by Alikei and learned the song “When You Use Your Senses.”

“Do you see that?” The first sense our scientists explored in depth was the sense of sight. To explain how we can use our sense of sight every day, we read *The Look Book*, by Jane Belk Moncure. The children learned that our eye is shaped like a ball but we can only see a small part of it from the outside. By looking into a classmate’s eye, each child was able to see the iris and the pupil. The scientists then put on their lab coats and performed several experiments to learn about concepts like depth perception, perspective and peripheral vision. The children had lots of fun playing “I Spy” and going on a scavenger hunt to put their sense of sight to the test.

“What’s that noise?” The children investigated their sense of hearing next. We read *The Listening Walk*, by Paul Showers and discovered that if you listen closely, you can hear sounds everywhere! The children learned that everything they hear is caused by vibrations known as sound waves. The children were excited to learn about different parts of the ear (especially the eardrum) and how the ear works to send a message to our brain, helping us to identify what we hear. Next, the children were sound detectives. Each child was given a bottle with a secret sound and s/he had to find a friend with the same secret sound as his/hers. The class then came together and had to listen to all the sounds and predict what was inside each bottle. Sense-sational!

In October we will continue to explore our senses through lessons on smell, taste and touch. Don’t be surprised if you hear your child saying they are using multiple senses when performing everyday activities! In the classroom and on the playground, the children are excitedly exploring the world around them using their five senses.