

Damariscotta Montessori School

Newsletter

Miss Casey's Primary Class

Although it has been a short week, the energy in the classroom has been high. Upon returning to school after a break we have been reviewing some of the ground rules that keep our environment safe, respectful and kind some of which include: walking inside, using mats on the floor, walking around mats, asking to work with someone and accepting their answer peacefully and cleaning up after ourselves.

The ground rules and the consequences that occur naturally for forgetting or ignoring them are a great part of the classroom setup. The children, at this point in the year, are really starting to find their voices and put into action the peer conflict resolution that we have been working so hard to master up to this point. Instead of coming immediately to tell a teacher what happened the children are being encouraged to try to resolve the issue and ask

Miss Sarah's Primary Class

A question I am often asked by parents, especially those of three year olds, is, "Is there anything we can do at home to support what is happening in school?"

Yes, there is!

In the area of language, three and four year olds are typically learning the sounds that letters make, which will prepare them for reading and writing. In school we work on learning the letter sounds using a material called sandpaper letters, as well as a game called I Spy. This version of I Spy is a bit different from the commonly known game, but is very much fun and contributes to a strong foundation for future readers and writers. This game can be played at home using miniature items, or small household objects. It is most appropriate for 3 and some 4 year olds, but, spiced up, it can be fun for five year olds as well. In the notes I refer to a sheet which details exactly how to pronounce the phonetic sounds of letters. You may be surprised to find that they

"We must learn how to call upon the man which lies dormant in the soul of a child."

Dr. Maria Montessori

other children for help before coming to an adult. This is giving them the communication skills for building healthy relationships for the rest of their lives and the confidence that they can solve problems with words. It also helps to encourage their independence thereby increasing their self esteem by empowering them to use their voice.

Coming up this month in the cultural area: Snowflakes! Hopefully Mother Nature will begin to cooperate! Also, hibernation and animals that do so. Again, any ideas for field trips or guests is welcome and appreciated.

aren't always exactly as we expect. I would be more than happy to provide a copy of this document to interested parents. You will find that I use the terms teacher/parent interchangeably and lesson/game interchangeably in the explanation.

Here is the lesson:

NAME OF ACTIVITY: I Spy Game

AREA:

General: Language

Specific: Oral/Auditory Development

MATERIALS:

Fabric Lined Basket, Porcelain bowl with lid, 3 objects

AIMS:

Direct: To enjoy the sounds of our language. To become aware that words are composed of sounds. To listen for the sounds in words.

Indirect: To hear the component sounds of words.

PREPARATION: Listening/Sound games

AGE: First Year

PRESENTATION OF THE LESSON:

1. Remove bowl from basket
2. Remove object from bowl
- 3 Name it
4. Set it down on basket
5. Repeat until all objects are in basket
6. Recap... "I have a..."
7. "I spy with my little eye, an object that begins with the sound ____
8. Child gives teacher that object and it is placed outside of basket
9. Repeat with all objects

WORK OF THE TEACHER/PARENT:

Points of Emphasis:

- Presenting the objects
- Saying, "I spy with my little eye..."

Language:

- Names of objects

POINTS OF INTEREST: (what draws the child to the game)

- Objects
- The way the teacher says, "I spy..."
- Playing a game

WORK OF THE CHILD:

Points of Consciousness: (i.e. what the child realizes from the lesson)

- Words begin with sounds
- Words are made up of sounds

Control of Error: Teacher/Parent (see notes on how to respond to error)

VARIATIONS: Different objects

EXTENSIONS:

- Add more objects
- Play I spy with objects in environment, outside, etc
- Ending sound I spy
- I Spy with beginning, end, middle sounds

SOURCES: Linda Seeley

NOTES:

- By sound we mean the actual sound the letter makes as a beginning sound, so, "m" would be mmmmm, "a" would be "ahhh" as in apple, and so on. See a teacher for a complete list!

- If young kids have difficulty in I Spy, place the object in their hand

- If the child selects the wrong object, say, "Yes, ____ begins with ____." Then move on

- This can be played with 1-3 kids at a time

Lower Elementary Class

It was a short week, but we managed to pack a lot in. We had our first readings of the play, *The Jungle Book*, based on Rudyard Kipling's book. We got back to work on reading and math. Thanks to Mrs. Hewson and Mr. Hinkley, who come in to give children extra reading practice. In writing the Elders are working on writing paragraphs to convey information from Science and from their reading. The first and second years are writing stories, and learning about sentences.

The highlight of our week was the presentation of "The Long Black Line". As the weather has been so spring-like we were able to do this outside. It is an impressionistic lesson designed

to show children just how recent is the advent of life on earth. when compared to the age of the earth. It is in preparation for our study of the timelines of life and man. The line is a spool of black ribbon, which is slowly unrolled. At first the line is black, then a gray strip appears, then blue, then brown, then green, and finally, right at the very end, is a small strip of red, showing the amount of time since the first human being appeared on earth.

On Friday Ms. Proffetti brought in different kinds of beans and seeds to make mosaics. It is a job that requires patience and the results were great.

Upper Elementary Class

First of all, let me extend a warm welcome to the Andrews family! Riley Andrews just joined

our classroom this week and we are delighted to have him as part of our classroom. Riley is 9 years old and will be in the upper elementary classroom.

Geometry was a focal point this week in the upper elementary. Group 1 (Riley, Mel, Robert, Ben, Sophie, Mackenzie, Ezra and Channing) studied the classification of quadrilaterals. Did you know that a rectangle and square are both parallelograms? Or, that a square is a fancy rectangle? Group 2 (Max, Thai Lien, Aidan and Tommy) finished its study of the Pythagorean Theorem, moving from a sensorial presentation to a mathematical use of the equation. Group 3

(Cris, Sam and Autumn) has begun its study of volume. This was an exciting lesson as we explored some new materials that allowed the kids to understand the concept of volume using many of the materials that they used when they were in the primary classroom.

This week we also have begun to tackle our first big research project. The children are now choosing topics, which is the beginning to any successful research paper. We will, over the next few weeks, start finding sources, taking notes and drafting the papers. I will be sending something home over the next week detailing the project.

From Chip's Desk

Welcome back from holiday break! I hope everyone had as restful vacation. We have a number of upcoming events that are exciting. First of all, the Parent's Association will be holding its annual Cabin Fever Pot Luck in February. They are looking into a place to hold the event now and should be announcing it soon. Secondly, we are now planning our first annual Spring Service Auction for May. This is a whole school event, and should be a great time. We are now in the planning stages of this event and would love any help that people can give. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 10th at 3:30 p.m. This event will be an evening out for adults and will include music, food, a very fun auction and the chance to socialize with other parents and friends of the school. We are really looking forward to this one.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the Parent Education workshop this month. We will be discussing a very special Montessori material, called the Constructive Triangles. This is a terrific example of a material that is used all the way from the primary to the upper elementary classrooms, moving from the very concrete to the abstract. We've done this presentation before and it is always a popular one.

As you are probably aware, we have begun our Annual Appeal. Each year we make a request for donations to the school to help us continue to provide scholarships, keep tuition to a reasonable level, maintain the building and grounds, and plan for future expansion. Our goal is simple: 100% participation. We are grateful for gifts of all sizes, and thank everyone in advance for their help with this effort.

Positive Discipline Corner

One of my favorite tools for helping children to understand that I have made a decision and intend to follow through with it is called "The Broken Record" technique. This works very well for situations where the adult is asking the child to follow through with a pre-stated and agreed upon responsibility. It works especially well when using "I notice..." statements. Here's an example of how it works:

In this case, Mom and Sarah have an agreement that Sarah makes her bed in the morning before she goes about other activities.

Mom: "Sarah, we agreed that your bed would be made before you do anything else in the morning. I noticed that your bed is unmade, and you are eating breakfast."

Sarah: "I'll do it as soon as I'm finished."

Adult: "We had an agreement."

Sarah: "O.K., I just want to finish eating."

Adult: "We had an agreement."

Sarah: "Mom, can you just wait."

Adult: "We had an agreement."

Sarah: "O.K., Mom."

While this may sound too good to be true, give it a try. You'll be surprised how well it works with both older and younger children. It is a great help in avoiding power struggles and arguments.

Thank You

- Kim Inman for your help with the sign board.
- Bill Hinkley and Teresa Hewson for reading with the children in the elementary classroom.
- Carolina Rushton for teaching Spanish.
- Doug Rushton for publishing the newsletter.
- Katie LeBel for publishing the recent press releases.
- Eric Dolloff for your help in getting the lumber for our shelving.

Announcements and Dates to Remember

- Wednesday, January 10 – Spring Event Meeting at 3:30 p.m.
 - Monday, January 15 – Martin Luther King's Birthday (No School)
 - Tuesday, January 16 – Classroom and Community Meeting
 - Tuesday, January 23 – Parent Education Workshop at 6:00 p.m. – Childcare is provided.
 - Thursday, January 25 – Upper Elementary Field Trip to see "Freedom Train" at the Merrill Auditorium.
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