

WEEKDAY SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2012

Learning Through Building

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Bring out the blocks, plop down on the floor and practice these activities to help foster pre-math skills with your preschooler. Blocks have been one of the best early learning toys for generations. The variety of shapes, colors and textures make these toys suited for children to learn through their senses. Block play for preschoolers also helps kids learn to problem-solve. They are able to see their product (how they are doing) and make their own corrections, as well as develop independence and self-confidence.

During block play kids are able to practice concepts and skills they use in math. Here's a look:

Counting. Encourage children to count the blocks for practice in one-to-one correspondence. Ask, "How many more blocks do you need? How many blocks did you use to build _____? (name of project)."

Sorting/Classifying. Blocks can be sorted or put into groups. Sorting blocks by shape, color, or size allows children to practice classifying. Which blocks are round? Which ones are square? How are they alike? How are they different? Use this activity for an easy clean-up, as well, by putting them into a bin while sorting.

Patterning. Arrange a pattern of blocks on the floor. Place a long rectangle, a square, a cylinder and a triangle in a row. First, have children practice copying the pattern right below it. Then ask, "What comes next?" Later, have kids create a pattern of their own. While playing, use the terms "alike" and "different," making sure children understand what you are trying to point out.

Measuring. Use blocks to measure children and other objects. For an example, discover "How many blocks tall is Emma?" And have kids and then measure "How many blocks long is the table?"

Comparing. Put blocks into two piles. Guess which pile has "more" blocks and which pile has "less." And then count the piles to see if they were correct. You can show children real examples of shorter, longer, equal, and same as, with blocks. Use your bathroom scale to find out which blocks are "heavier" or "lighter."

Learning Shape and Space. Point out the shapes of blocks — squares, rectangles, triangles, cylinders, curves, arches and angles. Note the position of the blocks as the children place other blocks over, under, above, below, and between the first set. Children discover distance as they put blocks near, far and close by. Space is made and changed by placing blocks in ways that fit a space and enclose it. This is the beginning of geometry.

Ordering. Blocks can be arranged in sequence in many ways. They can be arranged by size, from long to short, thin to fat, or large to small. Make groups of blocks counting each group and arrange them from least to most, and vice versa. Finally, put the blocks in a row and talk about the first block, the second block and so on.

Problem Solving. Through active play with blocks, children can relate math to the real world. They can use real objects to discover solutions to problems, such as, "If we build a tower, should we use the big blocks or the small blocks on the bottom?" And then, "Why did the tower fall over?" This prepares them for the many math problems they will solve later in their school years.

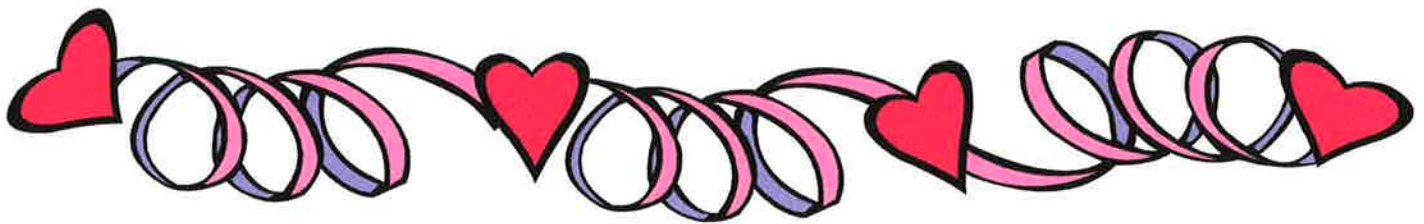
Invest in good equipment when planning your block play for preschoolers at home. There are many different kinds of blocks available at local toys stores and early childhood catalogs. From small table blocks to interlocking blocks to large hollow floor blocks, these toys will provide hours of fun and learning. Solid wood construction blocks may have a higher price tag initially, but with proper care and handling, these blocks will last for decades.



CLASSROOM NEWS
2-DAY and 3-DAY CLASSES
Mrs. Black

In the month of February we will be emphasizing sharing kindness and love in connection with Valentine's Day. In the three-day class, we will begin the month by launching our "kindness chain". Teachers will be on the look-out for acts of kindness, and for each act a link will be added to the chain. When the chain gets SO long that it hits the floor, we will have a class ice cream party to celebrate! We will also be getting our Valentine envelopes ready in anticipation of receiving Valentines, but hope that the lesson will be the joy of giving Valentines. Please send in 21 signed, but unaddressed Valentines for your child to give to his or her classmates by Friday Feb. 10th. Due to food allergies, we request that the Valentines be candy-free. By emphasizing kindness and giving we hope that the children will experience the warm, fuzzy feeling of making others happy!

In the two-day class we will be sharing the love with our families by having them come in on Valentine's Day for some Valentine fun. We will also be exchanging Valentines, so please send in 9 signed, but unaddressed Valentines for your child to give to classmates.



CLASSROOM NEWS
5-DAY NEWS—Mrs. Oxman

"Love, love, love! That's what it's all about!" This month we will begin preparations for the upcoming holiday Valentine's Day. We will continue to encourage kind words and actions with our kindness coins. In art we will be making: happy heart people, love bugs, valenpillars, and heart warming cards. We will focus our attention on two of our favorite leading men, George Washington & Abe Lincoln. We will be making log cabins, Abe Lincoln hats and American flags. In science we will polish coins (the scientific way), and in literature we will read books about these great men. We finish out the month with a unit all about "space." We will travel in our classroom spaceship, make rockets and solar systems and study constellations. F, H, J, and L are the featured letters this month. Thursdays have become one of the children's favorite days with our weekly trip to the gym! We will continue to strengthen our large muscles, work our hearts and learn to follow directions with games such as: fish and shark, musical hugs, jump the brook, and astronauts/asteroids. Could school be any more fun?!

We will be exchanging valentines on Tuesday, February 14. There are 24 children in the class. Cards can be sent in beginning on February 8th. Due to food allergies please send in candy-free cards. *Children should sign their cards but please leave envelopes blank —do not address with the name of a friend—for easier distribution.*

"P" is for Picky - Practical Tips for Feeding Choosy Eaters

Afraid that your preschooler will turn into macaroni and cheese because that's all he seems to want to eat these days? Meal times can be a battle when it seems like your child's diet consists of just one food group. Fortunately, these "food jags" are more frustrating than harmful.

Many of these common childhood eating behaviors are early attempts to be assertive, make decisions and exercise independence; actions that are very normal for a growing child. There are other reasons like a decreased appetite as growth rate slows and possible behavioral components (i.e. "no" really means "I need attention"). It's also not uncommon for children to refuse foods they previously enjoyed or have a fear when trying new foods.

It's a parent's job to provide healthy foods to their child, but it's the child's job to decide whether or not to eat them. Remember, it's not what your child eats at one meal, but rather over several days that really counts.

TIPS TO KEEP PEACE AT MEALS:

- Be patient. It sometimes takes 5-10 tries of a new food before a child will accept it.
- Don't force or bribe them to try a new food. Realize that they'll like some and not others. That's normal!
- Make mealtimes pleasant and relaxing rather than a power struggle. Stress during meals can foster poor eating habits, like emotional over or under eating.
- Watch for your child's normal appetite and cues that he or she is satisfied, and don't promote the "clean plate club." It's important for children to recognize when they've eaten enough.

- Encourage them to take at least one bite of a new food before eating their favorites. Don't make a big deal about it; be very matter of fact.
- Offer limited food choices and allow them to choose between 2-3 foods. This gives them a sense of control without being too overwhelming.
- Focus on a new food's color, shape or texture. Children rely primarily on the way a food looks.
- Make them part of the meal by having them plan, shop and prepare the menu. Bring them shopping and ask them to pick out a new food for the family to try.
- Let younger children feel they are in control of what they eat by feeding themselves.
- There is room for treats. Try not to restrict foods, or make them a "controlled substance." Don't go overboard and label foods as "good" or "bad". Children can become intensely attracted to forbidden foods. Teach your children moderation when it comes to sweets and treats.
- Many kids don't like extreme temperatures. Give hot food time to cool down and cold food a chance to warm up.
- Studies show that children adopt their parents' eating habits starting early in life. Don't expect your child to eat better than you do.

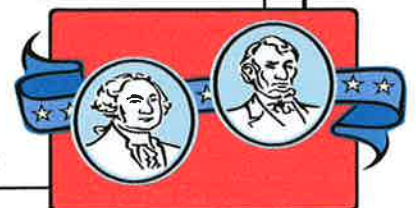
Take it one meal at a time and remember it's their overall diet, not just a day's worth that really counts. Focus on the things that are positive about your children's eating habits. Keeping these practical tips in mind will help your children develop a diet full of variety and lead to healthy eating habits.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

The Weekday School will be closed on February 10, 2012 for parent/teacher conferences, in the three and five-day classrooms. Please note that two-day class conferences will be held on March 15, 2012 and as the date draws nearer times for your child's conferences will be assigned.

Please note: Children do not attend conferences.

The Weekday School will be closed on February 20, 2012 in honor of President's Day.



DECISIONS, DECISIONS, DECISIONS!



This is the time of year when parents must decide where their child will attend school next year. Children benefit from the security, routine, friendships, and consistency of one preschool. Additionally, each teacher at the Weekday School has a keen understanding of your child's learning style. This understanding allows your child to profit academically as individualized learning programs are utilized to encourage growth and development in each student. The WDS curriculum is structured so that progress is made each year in a child's intellectual, social and emotional growth. Students gain additional benefits through attendance in the more structured environment of the five-day class as they participate in readiness activities to prepare them for their future learning environments. Children in Mrs. Oxman's class are engaged in science experiments, wood working (great for eye-hand coordination), computer activities, refine their letter recognition skills (beginning sounds and printing), and much, much more. Perhaps more importantly, through the Weekday School curriculum children are able to learn at their own individual pace while maintaining that sense of wonder and enjoyment of learning. Through the reassurance of the familiar classrooms, through the comfort of continued friendships and through the loving guidance of our talented teaching staff students are well prepared for their kindergarten experience. Many area private schools pressure parents to have their child attend a preschool program associated with the school that parents hope their child will attend throughout their elementary, middle and high school years. In the entire history of BMPC WDS (that's nearly 50 years!) there has never been an instance in which a student was not accepted into the school of their parents choice upon completion of their BMPC Weekday School education. This acceptance rate at private schools, confirms the outstanding academic reputation that the Weekday School retains within the educational community.

For those children who will be "graduating" and going on to kindergarten we encourage parents to visit the kindergarten classrooms. Ask questions! Some possible questions would include: Is the kindergarten developmentally appropriate (that is, designed for the interactive ways most five-year olds learn best) and designed to meet children's physical, social, and emotional as well as cognitive development or is it mostly academic and highly structured? Is there a mix of active and focused activities? How well is the kindergarten prepared to meet the individual needs of your child? Will other children attend who are close in age to your child or does the school encourage most younger children to wait a year? Will the kindergarten curriculum be challenging and satisfying to your child? By asking questions, parents can come to a better understanding of the goals of an individual program and decide whether or not it is a good "fit" for their child.



PARENT- TEACHER CONFERENCES





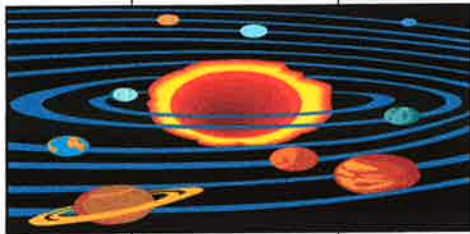
A parent- teacher conference is a time for listening and communicating openly. Your child's teacher has prepared a formal report and will go through the report with you during your conference time. Our teachers will go over the strengths seen in your child and may point out areas that your child may need to work on. For example, a teacher may suggest stringing beads or practicing cutting skills at home to improve your child's fine motor skills. Or a teacher may suggest play dates as a way of increasing a child's social confidence.

Children do not attend conferences so that you can feel free to ask any questions or to discuss any concerns you may have about your child with your child's teacher. Think of yourself and your child's teacher as a united team whose shared goal is to help make your child's preschool experience a happy and productive one.

February 2012

"If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy talks. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales."

Albert Einstein

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>My Many Moods</i>			1 	2	3	4
5 <i>Valentines</i>	6 	7	8	9	10 NO SCHOOL: Parent/ Teacher Conferences	11
12 <i>Valentines/ Fairy Tales</i>	13	14 <i>If you want, wear some- thing red to school!</i>	15 	16	17	18
19 <i>Transportation</i>	20 <i>School Closed in honor of President's Day</i>	21 	22	23	24	25
26 <i>Space Adventures</i>	27	28 	29			