

A Strong Focus on Curriculum and Instruction in our Pre-K Classrooms *submitted by Dr. Robin Hooper*

***There is always
a moment in
childhood when
the door opens
and lets the
future in.***

-Graham Greene



Save the Dates!

**Kindergarten
Lottery deadline
March 2, 2012**

**NYSAEYC
Annual Conference
in Buffalo
April 19-21, 2012**

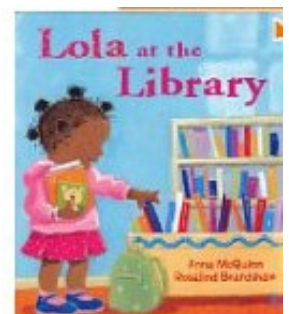
**Transition to
Kindergarten
May 19, 2012**

During March the focus on curriculum and instruction intensifies as Pre-K staffs implement the High Scope Preschool Curriculum in their classrooms. At this point all Pre-K staff have received professional development centered on the basic elements of the curriculum. The one component of the curriculum remaining to be covered, *Numbers Plus*, the mathematics component, will be the topic of April's professional development sessions. Although mathematics concepts have been integrated into the basic curriculum, the *Numbers Plus* component provides content aligned with High Scope's key development indicators that align with the NYS Common Core Standards for Prekindergarten. The focus of our professional development will be to provide an overview for staff and to familiarize them with the alignment with the standards.

Mathematics education is appropriately integrated into literacy lessons for our preschool learners. The language of math is incorporated into everyday communications and the symbols used to describe quantities look very similar to the letters used to communicate words to young children. Our preschoolers absorb new information using all of their senses; therefore learning activities focused on mathematics concepts are designed to incorporate the discovery of quantities using movement, oral counting, manipulatives, songs and chants, charts, graphs, measuring tools, technology and "teachable moments." The presentation of mathematics concepts in naturalistic contexts allows students to experience mathematics as part of their everyday world and supports student understanding of the relevance of math to their lives at the initial stages of learning. Lessons are designed to provide opportunities for "teachable moments" to occur in the classroom.

During the next few months our technical support teachers will be working in Pre-K classrooms focusing on developing lessons and professional development required to become certified in the High Scope Preschool Curriculum. As part of their requirements for certification teachers will be videotaping themselves presenting lessons in our classrooms. The support of parents and classroom teachers is making this critical step possible for our district. Through the certification of our teachers in the High Scope Preschool Curriculum our district gains independence in our implementation of the curriculum. Once our teachers are certified they will be able to certify other teachers. This is an exciting point in our implementation that promises to provide the impetus needed to move our district forward in the process.

During February our prekindergarten students participated in a district-wide initiative to support literacy, "ROC Reads." We were pleased to have been included in this prekindergarten through grade 12 initiative focused on the shared reading of a book at each grade level. Each prekindergarten student received a copy of *Lola at the Library* by Anna McQuinn and had the opportunity to complete a response sheet to be handed in by the classroom teacher. Each child participating in the initiative had an opportunity to receive free meal coupons from a local grocery store, Wegman's. Preschoolers with older siblings had the opportunity to participate in the same literacy event as their brothers and/or sisters. This is powerful strategy as we know preschoolers learn more from imitating others than from doing what others tell them to do. We are looking forward to increased opportunities to participate in prekindergarten through grade 12 initiatives in the future.



Following Children's Interests Leads to Problem-solving Opportunity and Lots of Language at # 22 School *submitted by Melissa Asenato*

During work time at School 22-RPPP, Ms. Ivy observed the children's play was centered around pets. Cat play soon became a favorite plan. To extend the children's interest in cats, Ms. Ivy decided to plan some small group work around cats. They began their week by reading the book, "The Three Little Kittens." The children developed their fine motor skills, by creating their own mittens. They were introduced to words such as: "in, out and around." Of course, the children wanted to taste a pie while wearing their mittens just like the kittens did! "Oh No! We have a problem. Our mittens are dirty!" Just in time for problem solving. The children went to the water table and washed their mittens. What could they use to clean them? The children tried different tools to clean their dirty mittens exploring the words "scrub, twist, wring, and rinse. When they were clean, the children hung them out to dry!



The children ("kittens") eat their pie while wearing their mittens.



How are we going to clean these mittens?

Organization of Materials at St. Paul DayCare



In HighScope classrooms, materials are labeled with words and tracings/photos/pictures/real items, that the children can "read" themselves. Organization of materials provides an invitation for children to use items as well as return them to the proper place. UPK teacher, Emily Hasler, displays spices and cooking utensils on a Velcro strip. Musical instruments are invitingly displayed on an open shelf.



Alphabetic Principle: Ways to Incorporate the Four Components into Classrooms

Compiled by Tammy Beller from February District-Wide PD

Name Recognition:

- mailbox/cubby/name tags/cots
- place settings at table
- attendance chart
- letter link cards (using symbol or name or both)
- question of the day, record answer next to their name
- names all over room for reference during work time (name cards attached with Velcro)
- job chart
- small group baskets
- toothbrush
- SGT lists
- work in progress sign, child puts their own name on it
- Alpha March song
- message board
- planning/recall
- scaffold in last name (when appropriate)
- name puzzles
- name songs
- home school connection (send home students names and letter links)
- Name & letter link in class book
- Photo book

Name Writing:

- name cards with letter links in various areas
- sign in
- waiting list for area – sign in
- name cards with letter links / sign pictures
- letter links book
- tracing names
- letter stamps/beads
- letter stencils/envelopes/letters/cards in writing area
- wipe boards with magnetic strip
- mailing letters to each other
- clip board in block area
- Lakeshore magnetic writing letter kit
- notebooks / pencils in all pencils
- graphing
- planning/recall
- sidewalk chalk
- glue/glitter/sand
- tracing cards with children's names
- making invitations
- Sign art work
- Write name in shaving cream
- Trace large letter link sign
- Write names on white boards, in play doh
- Spell name with pretzels or cheese-its, craft sticks
- Tracing paper

Letter Recognition:

- magnetic letters
- upper / lower case letters / foam letters / 3-D letters
- children's alphabet books
- alphabet puzzles/books
- computer- Starfall.com
- letter/number rug – jumping
- toys (eg....letter train, play dough/cookie cutters, stamps)
- name tags
- environment print / labels around the room
- letters in sand and water table
- games (ex: circling matching letters, fishing for letters)
- letter links
- sign language
- sign in sheets
- highlighting letters
- letter stamps
- noticing other names with same letter
- pipe cleaners/wikki sticks/shaving cream/play dough
- Songs
- leap frog games
- Magnetic, foam, sandpaper letters (SGT)
- Make letters with rhythm sticks

Letter-Sound Correspondence:

- say the sound the letter makes when talking about the letter
- small group exploration
- starting to use other words beside letter link picture
- rhyming word to name using a letter for everyone
- Morning message
- materials: puppets for sounds
- letter links
- name cards with beginning letter on back
- creating a class book of sounds
- songs and chants (ex: willoby wolloby woo, voice)
- create own word cards for writing area
- letter stamps/beads
- games ("whose name starts with the /j/ sound etc)
- clean up game (Think of a way that starts with /r/)
- ChaCha dance (transition song – start out with "cha, cha, cha, cha, cha", then ask kids what other sound can we use....ex: tah, tah, tah, tah, tah)
- Transition activity: child picks a letter and other children with the same 1st letter in their name moves to next activity.
- drawing awareness to initial sounds in books
- alliteration games
- Letter links (cubby, nap mats)
- 3 dimensional objects – begin w/the "d" (etc.) sound
- Paying attention to letter/sound on area cards at recall
- Laminated letter-links



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Planning for Outdoor Winter Fun at School # 57

submitted by Betsy Wing-Schroeder and photo by Maureen Casey-Kulic

We have been trying to get outside daily even on the days when snow is barely covering the ground. It has been a very different Rochester winter with the snow “drought.” Many teachers note that the children don’t have outdoor snow clothing or boots. A classroom supply of boots, hats, mittens and snow pants can be a reality. We start the school year off by letting parents know in September that we go outside daily, even in the winter. We remind them again in October when I see the first signs of winter wear in the stores. We talk about purchasing clothing from the store, thrift or consignment shops or asking relatives for outgrown items. We also talk about having water proof boots and mittens that children can put on independently. We joke that you only have 1 child to get ready to play in the snow, we have 16-18! Our classroom collection has grown due to a conversation with some friends I work out with.

They went through their families outgrown winter wear and asked their friends and neighbors to check their closets. It was amazing how many times there was a bag or two of snow clothing waiting for me at the fitness studio. Several of our Pre-K families have also donated to the collection when their youngest child has outgrown their boots and snow pants. The season’s first outdoor snow day is exhausting helping everyone get dressed to play in the snow. This was a great small group activity. The more you go out, the children will become independent dressers, help one another and faster. They don’t want to be the last one to get dressed. I just had a conversation with a friend who teaches in a suburban nursery school about having a hat and mitten drive for our class next fall to replace and restock the bin. There are opportunities for all around you to gather outdoor clothing...all it took was a conversation.



Children love “chillin” in the snow—dressed properly