

Southminster

Early Learning Academy News



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From Michele

We often talk about how much kids learn when they come to school. What I really haven't shared with all of you is how much I have learned from your kids over the years.

Two topics I'd like to share with you this month are two things I've research but continue to learn daily from your children. That is really listening to them and paying attention to their boundaries.

First, really listening to them. When they're little it's easy to rush them along as we are often in a hurry. Children take long to complete their thoughts and most times we sort of listen and just continue moving along. Or, when they get older, we may listen only to advise or solve the problem. Older kids don't want us to solve the problem and definitely don't want us to advise. They often just want to vent and perhaps use us as a sounding board. We need to support them while giving them the space to figure things out for themselves. To show we trust them to make good decisions.

Little children have a story to tell. Sometimes, in these stories, their true fears, worries and feelings come out. They have opinions. They know when we are really listening and when we are halfway listening. They can tell.

In my later years I've considered myself to be a pretty good listener of children. Not when my own children were young. I was often in a hurry. I sort of wish someone would have written an article like this for me to read back then. There are so many things I would do differently had I know how quickly those years would all be gone. But today I am keenly aware that I am not always a good listener, but I am very much wanting to change that.

I follow Mr. Rogers very carefully these days. I often stop to think what he would do in this situation. I've found this helps me be a better listener.

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APAT News

Hi Southminster Families,

Happy March! We are excited for the upcoming Carnival Night this month. Be sure to join us on Thursday, March 5th from 6:30pm-8:00pm for Carnival Night. It will be a fun evening of games and crafts. We hope to see you all there!

Jessica, Devan, Miranda, and Kelli
APAT Co- Chairs

Carnival Night!



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A few weeks ago, we had a little boy not want to go out on the playground. He just insisted he was, “not going out there.” So, the teachers called me in to see if I could help. Of course, I thought, ok, I’ll just talk to my little friend and tell him, I’m sorry you don’t want to go outside but you have to go with your class.” So, I went into the room ready to have this conversation with him.

After saying all the things, I thought I needed to say. I thought a minute and then I just asked him why he didn’t want to go outside. He had a lot to say. He told me he had been out earlier and was very cold. He said he didn’t want to go outside because he would be cold, and he wasn’t willing to do that again. So, you see, he wasn’t being difficult, he was taking a stand. He was doing what he needed to do to see his needs met.

I talked with him and said how about this? It’s much warmer out now than it was when you were outside earlier. I bet you’ll enjoy going outside now. If you still think it’s too cold, I’ll come back inside with you and we’ll play in the room. So, we went outside where he noticed it was much warmer now and he decided he would stay outside with his friends.

The moral of this story is often adults react in anger to what they might see in a child’s behavior as defiance. When what they really need to do is take a minute to assess whether this might be an emotional response to something. This is where really listening to children comes in to play. They have a lot to say. Sometimes when you listen you can get to the root of what might really be bothering them. Or, you just might find what they have to say to be truly amazing. I have.

Second, Boundaries. I’ve been told by many people they find it interesting when they hear me ask your children if I can hug them. It surprises me that people are surprised by this. Hugging a child is not a right that all adults have. We all have boundaries and we expect our boundaries to be respected. Why are children not entitled to this right? I think many of us were raised to think it’s impolite not to hug grandma or other family members on demand. It’s not impolite to respect a child’s boundaries. If a child is not comfortable hugging someone they don’t see often, it’s ok. They can say hello or goodbye verbally or with a wave.

I ask our children if I can hug them all the time. Most of the time they say yes but on occasion they say no. It’s ok. they’re just not in the mood. I tell them that, and maybe they’ll say yes next time.

Respecting our children’s right to have boundaries is something we all need to consider. There is a difference between respecting their boundaries and implied rudeness. So, they don’t want to hug. How about a hello or a wave?

Have a wonderful month.

- *Michele*

What’s Happening In March

March 5 – APAT Carnival night 6:30-8:00

March 18-21 – Spirit of Music with Mrs. Kline

MUSIC

February has been a busy month for music. We played with scarves and many of our classes met a new singing friend, Groovy Joe. Free play with the instrument box is a regular treat. We can't wait to share everything we have learned with our families during Spirit of Music week! (Grandparents/other caregivers are welcome to join us, and siblings can join in the fun as well!)

- Mrs. Kline

Parent Tot

As we March into the Spring Season it is an exciting time in our class. The developmental growth in these little students is amazing to witness. Their vocabulary and word usage is exploding. It is incredible to witness the new skills and abilities that are expanding each week. But more exciting is their comfort in the school setting, we have become friends and truly enjoy our time together.

Mrs. Nave



Two Day Two's

Our 2s friends had so much fun in February making lots of valentines, focusing on the color red and learning about our five senses!

We enjoyed learning about our feelings at the All School Party. We created happy, sad and grumpy faces out of colorful play doh, played with monkeys (and the parachute!) in the ball room and even snacked on "Grumpy Monkey" cookies!

In March we will concentrate on sharing and friendship and the color blue. More information will be coming about our special "Spirit of Music" day on 3/26.

Happy Spring!

Mrs. Cozzens & Mrs. McCormick



Two Day Two's

We are seeing all sorts of wonderful things happening in the Twos: Lots and lots of language, children playing together and saying things like "she/he is my friend" and following the classroom routine without reminders. We will build on this growth as we focus on feelings, sharing, and friendship during March. This is the time of the year when our Twos begin interacting much more, giving us lots of opportunities to practice and talk about ways to be a good friend.

We also hope to get back outside to play more and appreciate your child being dressed for the weather, so that we can play on the playground on days when it is warm and dry enough.

Thank you for sharing your precious children with us,

Lori Guenther and Nicole Gilberg



Two/Three Day Three's

Goodbye February, hello March! We continued to add to our caterpillar with the color red and the heart shape for February and we will continue to add the color blue and diamond shape for March. Please note the dates for the second week of March to bring in something blue and wear blue.

We had a great time in February. Valentine's Day was a special day for the teachers and the Parent Volunteer - Mrs. Swager to host a party for the children in the classroom. The children made a valentine bag during class time. The children placed their cards in the classmates' bags and enjoyed special stories and activities.

Another special day was our All School Party. The children loved the stories about feelings and how amazing we all are. We even sculpted faces with different facial expressions for different emotions. The relay and dice games in the ball room were lots of fun. We loved the great songs and activities in music, and our special snack was delicious!!

The study for the month of February was boxes and buildings. We discussed boxes, their uses, and what the children would like their box to become. Their creations were quite imaginative. Look for them on display in April during open house. The children enjoyed learning about the Three Little Pigs. They made all types of houses in the story: straw, stick, and brick houses. We talked about which house was the strongest and the weakest house.

In March we will be completing the Clothing study - seasonal clothing, buttons, snaps, and a variety of fabrics. Our art will reflect a fabric medium, and the children will share stories of their favorite outfit and how they get dressed.

Looking forward to a few out of the box activities!

Mrs. Tischuk and Mrs. Santos



Three Day Three's

In February we had fun during the all-school party and Valentine's Day. We learned about buildings and as part of that we talked about the 3 Little Pigs and some famous buildings around the world. In March we will be learning about clothing, the color blue and the diamond shape. We'll introduce the kids to charts when we look at different characteristics of the clothes we're wearing. We've really been enjoying learning more about each child through the All About Me posters/class visits and we're looking forward to seeing the rest of those this month. Hopefully the weather will be nicer and we'll get to spend some more time playing outside this month.

Mrs. Moon & Mrs. Hannan



Three Day Three's

February was a lot of fun in the 3's as we learned all about buildings! We talked about the different types and parts of buildings, what happens in buildings and how they get built. The children seemed very excited to learn and share their thoughts about buildings! Our "Three Little Pigs" activity was very exciting for everyone as was constructing our own buildings out of shoeboxes and then putting them all together to make a town!

We had fun at our Valentine's party passing out cards to our friends. The children really enjoyed making their own valentines for their families.

In March we will learn about clothing, the color blue and the diamond shape. More info will be coming about the Spirit of Music on 3/25!

Happy Spring!

Mrs. Cozzens & Mrs. Zappone



Four Day Four's

February has flown by with all the building we have been doing! Our study of buildings has given us the opportunity to learn about many kinds of buildings, what it takes to make them, and what happens inside them. We even learned about different jobs that involve building-including architects. Students then became real architects by designing their own buildings. They drew blueprints and used boxes and recycled materials to create the buildings they had designed. This final project helped students to understand all that goes into building structures. They really enjoyed the project and can't wait to share them with you at our April open house. In March, we look forward to a study of clothing.

Mrs. Kontos and Mrs. Moses



Three Day Four's

February was short but filled with so many exciting activities! Friends explored different feelings we experience and the different ways we can continue to respect one another with compassion (this was the theme for our All-School-Party, Mrs. Brado planned for us!). For our love and kindness unit, we drew a map of our heart, baked heart shaped pretzels together, made sensory bottles to help us calm down when we are overwhelmed by our feelings, and designed and mailed hugs for our families and friends far away. In our building unit, we designed our own 3 Day 4's building with slides, parachuting platform, pools filled with candies and even a ladder leading us to all the planets in the universe! The students played tag outside (weather permitting) and even held a LIVE turtle in their laps during science with Ms. Verna!! In March, we will explore the theme of clothing and continue studying rhyming words. We can't wait for all the learning and laughter ahead of us!

Mrs. Bosbach & Mrs. Frederick



Pre-K

Wow! What a month! We have been so busy with our building study that it has flown by! We have learned about all kinds of buildings, what happens inside of them and how they are made. We have also discussed the types of jobs that are involved with building structures, including architects. This discussion led to our culminating project-building our own buildings. Students had the opportunity to act as real architects by designing and making blueprints for their own buildings. They then used boxes and recycled materials to create the buildings they had designed. They worked very hard on these projects and look forward to showing them to you at open house in April. In March, we are looking forward to a study of clothing.

Mrs. Kontos, Mrs. Moses & Mrs. Frederick



Kindergarten Enrichment

Europe is the destination for Kindergarten Enrichment in March.

We will begin the month talking about England and Germany focusing on castles. The children will construct castles out of various cardboard shapes and paint them with grays, browns, and whites; the colors of castles in Europe. The origin of family surnames will be our next topic. We will also learn about family "coats of arms" and have each child create a coat of arms for their family name. We will conclude our study of Germany by making Bavarian pretzels and learn why pretzels have their distinctive shape.

Ireland will be our next stop just in time for St. Patrick's Day. We will make four-leaf clover "mosaic" paperweights using shades of green glass. We will incorporate science into our study of Ireland by making our own butter and trying some on Irish soda bread.

The last country we will study is France. Famous French artists will be our main focus. The children will make their own version of Monet's Waterlilies to hang in our hallway art gallery. We will also study Seurat's pointillism method and try our hand at some "dot art" on a mural in our hall. March is an exciting month for our Kindergarten Enrichment Class!

Lori Guenther and Jenny Gallo



Eat + Play = Learn

Wow! February flew by in Eat Play Learn.... we were very busy learning about our artist of the month, Andy Warhol. **The most interesting fact that we learned was Mrs. Moses' great-grandmother was the midwife that delivered him!** We talked about how he had A LOT of cats all named "Sam" and how he grew up in our very own city of Pittsburgh!

In March we are going to celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday, learn about shadows and how they are created, we will talk about and paint some of the beautiful sunsets that we see. Finally, we will learn about the famous artist Dale Chihuly. We will look at pictures of his beautiful colored glass, watch some videos on how glass artists create their beautiful work and create some of our own "glass" artwork.

Thank you for sharing your wonderful kids with us. They make us laugh daily and we truly enjoy our time with them.

Mrs. Gilberg
Mrs. McCormick
Mrs. Zappone



SAVE THE DATE

SPIRIT OF MUSIC WEEK

MARCH 23-26

Monday March 23rd

9-9:30 M/W 2's
11-11:30 4 day 4's
12:50-1:20 PM Three's

Wednesday March 25th

9-9:30 3 day 3's (Moon)
11-11:30 3 day 3's (Cozzens)
12:50-1:20 Pre-K

Tuesday March 24th

9-9:30 2 day 2's (Guenther)

Thursday March 26th

9-9:30 2 Day 2's (Cozzens)
11-11:30 3 day 4's