

# Southminster

## Early Learning Academy News

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### *From Michele*

Over these last ten years or so since I have been a Pre-School Director I often find myself explaining to parents why it is more important to encourage learning through play in our young children, and less important to find a pre-school classroom that has a more academic focus. Although those classrooms do exist, it is refreshing to see that so many parents have now joined the army of those of us who know that play is the necessary building block to learning. Play is the most important work of childhood!

As we have talked about many times before, children develop at their own rate. This is why children at the same age can be at different place during their development. All children progress through the stages of development sequentially, no child skips any stage, but how quickly they move through each stage is specific to each child individually. This is one of the attributes that make children different from one another and special for being who they are. The developmental appropriateness of our program relies in our belief of this process; and also in our belief that young children learn best when they are learning through play.

Because so many people focus so much on academics and try to start children much too early in structured learning, children no longer have the opportunity to play as often as they should. Many people have forgotten that play is the fundamental step towards learning and school readiness.

Like crawling and walking, children learn many things when they are ready. When learning is fun children learn to love learning. When children are pushed to do things before they are ready they become anxious and frustrated; perhaps even perceiving learning to be somewhat more of a chore than something to get excited about. Learning should be fun for a child, something they enjoy. We all want our children to love learning and to become excited about the things they are learning about.

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## APAT News

Happy February! While there are no APAT events this month, we are excited about a new event coming in March. Instead of PJ Night, join us on Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup> from 6:30pm-8:00pm for Carnival Night. It will be a fun evening of games and crafts. Look for more details coming to you via e-mail later this month.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Amy, Jessica, and Shannon  
APAT Co-Chairs



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Play is the way young children learn about the world they live in. When children engage in open ended play they are in-charge. The play is unstructured, self-paced and self-directed. They begin a journey or an experiment and see where it takes them. This journey is the learning process.

When children are playing, they are working on many skills at one time. They are developing the basic skills they need to be able to read, write and do math later in life, and they are learning about these things in a way that is fun and natural for them.

In addition to learning academic skills children also strengthen their social/emotional development. When they are in the dramatic play area, for example, they are learning how to take charge, cooperate and plan. They assign roles, decide how to carry out the play and can continue for hours building on their thoughts and ideas.

An amazing amount of leaning happens when we take our children outside. Here they can observe nature ask questions, and examine cause and effect. These are all great ways to encourage your children to wonder about things. It's a great opportunity for us to facilitate discovery by encouraging our children to ask questions and to then encourage them to push the limits and wonder even further about the observations they are making. Ask your children open ended questions such as: I wonder what would happen if... Maybe even suggest a visit to the library to do research. Here is where your journey begins and here is where your children begin to love the leaning process and where they will become lifelong learners.

Wherever your journey leads you, spend this month playing and learning with your child. You will love it.

Have a wonderful month!

- Michele

### Reminder:



Circle driveway is right turn in and right turn out only.

### Currently Scheduled Events Mark Your Calendar!

Coming Up:

February 18– No School Presidents Day

February 19 or 20 – Vision Screening (Forms coming home soon)

February 25 or 26 – Science with Miss Verna = Ponds



## Two Day Two's

Dear Two's Parents,

Thank you all for making time in your schedules to join us for conferences. It is such a privilege to have the opportunity to share stories with you about your children's time at school.

In February, we'll have fun exploring "healthy me" ideas. We will talk about germs and do a fun activity with pom poms that shows how to avoid sharing germs. Don't be surprised if you hear a few new songs about washing germs down the drain and covering sneezes. We will also spend time talking about and using our senses as we try out our cooking skills by making (and smelling and tasting) applesauce.

As always, thank you for sharing your precious children with us!

Mrs. Guenther and Mrs. Gilberg



## Two Day Three's & Three Day Three's

Goodbye January, hello February! We will continue to add to our caterpillar with the color red and the heart shape. Please note the dates for the first week to bring and wear red.

Valentine's Day is a special day for the teachers' to host a party for the children in the classroom. The children will make a valentine bag during class time. If you would like to send in valentines with your child, please put your child's name only on the valentine and he/she can place the cards in the classmates bag during the morning free playtime. Please note- nothing edible and no small items for children under age of 3 due to choking hazards.

Starting this month will be a new activity called the 'Mystery Reader'. We will enjoy having a family member read a favorite story to the class during the first circle time in the morning (9:00 - 9:20 AM). This new activity will continue through the months of March and April to accommodate everyone's schedule. The family member who is the 'Mystery Reader' will email Mrs. Tischuk clues to give the children the day before he/she is scheduled to read to the class. The children will enter the room, and the family member will wait in the hall. After all the children have arrived, the teachers will give the emailed clues for the children to guess the reader. Then the 'Mystery Reader' enters the room and reads the story. Please keep the 'Mystery Reader' a secret. It's so much fun for the children to guess and be surprised. On the child's 'Mystery Reader' day he/she will be the snack person (snack of their choice from the healthy snack list) and the leader of the day. Please note that the 'Mystery Reader' is designated as 'MR' on the calendar.

The new study for the month of February will be that of boxes. We will discuss boxes, their uses, how they are made, and what children like to do with boxes. Please send in two empty boxes (cereal, cracker, shoe, etc.) that your child can share and play with during this month. We will collect and label the boxes during the first week of February.

Looking forward to a few out of the box activities!

Mrs. Tischuk (jtischuk@verizon.net), Mrs. Zappone, and Mrs. Findle



## Three Day Four's

As we returned from our break, the 3 day 4's began to investigate hibernation. Our class discussed **WHAT** animals hibernate, **WHERE** animals hibernate, **WHEN** animals prefer to hibernate, and **WHY** animals hibernate. Our class finished their Number Book. As we move into February, the 3 day 4's will begin a handwriting unit focusing on the alphabet and writing each student's first name. Our Creative Curriculum will have our class exploring a new theme: building.

Mrs. Nalitz and Mrs. Frederick



## Three Day Three's

Despite the cold weather and not being able to go outside, we had so much fun in January! We spent a lot of time learning all about hibernation. It was a new word for most of the children so we practiced saying it a lot and learned a very catchy new song about it (ask your child to sing it for you!). And we had lots of fun making caves for our bears to hibernate in.

We also created art using paint and lots of black and white items. We practiced recognizing and drawing rectangles. And I'm sure the highlight of the month for many of our children was Science! We got to learn about, touch and hold snakes, lizards, turtles and even a dragon!

In February we will focus on the color red and the heart shape. And we will learn all about buildings. We will have a small valentine's party on 2/13. Information will be sent home soon.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Mrs. Cozzens & Mrs. Hannan



## Four Day Four's

We can't believe how fast January has gone by! The children have been working hard on our hibernation study. They have learned what hibernation means, what animals hibernate, and why they do. A variety of activities have encouraged this learning—reading, brainstorming, and art activities. The big highlight of our hibernation study was the culminating activity—pajama day! The students enjoyed sharing their favorite books and “loveys” with the class. They also participated in pajama/hibernation related games, stories, and art projects. The hibernation den we created from blankets was a big hit! The children were thrilled to enter the den and read or “sleep”. This month, we started our alphabet books. The children will be learning what letters look like, how they sound, and how to write them. In February, we look forward to a study of buildings. Enjoy these frigid, snowy days “hibernating” with your children!

Mrs. Kontos and Mrs. Moses



## Pre-K

January has truly flown by! Our hibernation study has gone very well. The children have learned what hibernation means, what animals hibernate, and why. We have done a variety of activities including reading, brainstorming, and art projects. Our very popular pajama day was a great success. The children enjoyed sharing their favorite books and “loveys”. They also participated in pajama time games and activities. The hibernation den that we created from sheets and blankets was a big hit! The children enthusiastically entered the den to “sleep” or read. We started our alphabet book this month. We will be learning how to write the letters, the sounds they make, and what words start with each letter. In February, we look forward to a study of buildings. Enjoy “hibernating” with your kiddos on these cold days!

Mrs. Kontos, Mrs. Moses & Mrs. Frederick



## Eat + Play = Learn

January has been a busy month in Eat Play Learn! We became artists, painting Monet’s Bridge and our own version of the Northern Lights. We talked about hibernation and made bird feeders to feed our feathered friends. Finally, we will talk about Punxsutawney Phil and hope he DOESN’T see his shadow!

In February, we will study dinosaurs. We will build together a giant dinosaur, make fossils of different dinos and make and wear dinosaur feet. We will talk about Dr. Seuss and do many fun art projects that go along with his stories! And last but not least, we will make ice cream using different recipes and vote on which one we like the best!

Stay warm!

Mrs. Gilberg, Mrs. McCormick & Mrs. Zappone



## Parent Tot

February is all about hearts and kindness. They all have big, kind hearts and truly enjoy being together. I continue to be amazed at the language growth and they are now eager to share their opinions. I look forward to witnessing their future developmental accomplishments.

Betty Nave



## Kindergarten Enrichment

In February, Kindergarten Enrichment will travel to Asia. Our month will begin by celebrating Chinese New Year. We will ring in the Year of the Pig with a school-wide dragon dance. The children will paint couplets to express their wishes for the new year. Finally, we will learn about the importance of the Lantern Festival as the children create red and gold lanterns and guess lantern riddles.

Science in February is an investigation of carbohydrates. We will talk about how many living things, including humans, consume the starches in plants. The children will learn that these starches serve as quick sources of energy. The classes will predict whether some commonly eaten foods contain starch and test their predictions using the iodine test for starch. Be sure to ask them what starches they find in their lunch!

February will wrap up with a lesson about Japan and Daruma, or Japanese wishing dolls. The children will sculpt their own dolls from clay and discover how to mark their dolls to show when their wish comes true.

Mrs. Guenther & Mrs. Gallo



## Music

**SAVE THE DATE      SPIRIT OF MUSIC WEEK      MARCH 18-21**

Spirit of Music Week is when you and your family are invited to come and experience a music class WITH us. YOU get to play and sing with us...an interactive time for all in Fellowship Hall.

More information will be coming...but we wanted to give you your class times so you can put them on your Calendars!!

### **Monday March 18<sup>th</sup>**

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

### **Tuesday March 19<sup>th</sup>**

9-9:30                  2 day 3's

### **Wednesday March 20<sup>th</sup>**

9-9:30                  3 day 3's (Tischuk)  
11-11:30                3 day 3's (Cozzens)

### **Thursday March 21<sup>st</sup>**

9-9:30                  T/Th 2's  
11-11:30                3 day 4's

*Music class has been full of fun and learning. We can't wait to share all of our favorites with you!*

*Mrs. Kline*

