



January 26, 2006

First-Plymouth Early Education Programs
Dimensions Research Classrooms

DIMENSIONS
Educational Research Foundation
dimensionsfoundation.org

NEWS

Executive Director's Message

by Nancy Rosenow

Our "Extended Families"

Family Night, on February 17 gives us all a chance to be "extended family" to each other. The event, which features a spaghetti dinner, a chance to enjoy free activities, and a fun silent auction offering baskets that children's classes put together, as well as items for parents, is always one of our most popular events. The theme of this year's Family Night is "Family Traditions." I was struck with how right that title is after a conversation I had with my own daughter (who attended our program 22 years ago). She asked me if we still had Family Night and told me she still remembers how much fun the evening is. I was so pleased to know that one of her preschool functions remains a happy memory for her. I hope you'll try to attend if possible and I hope the event will build some "happy memories" for your children.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices – Helping Children Learn to Read and Write

I want to continue thinking about developmentally appropriate practices in our newsletter for the next few issues. Please see the "Children's Activities" section of this newsletter for more information on how our teachers support children's learning in a broad range of categories. Below, I'd like to focus just on how we help children learn about reading and writing by

quoting from a position paper developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the largest professional organization for early educators and one of the most well-respected. (This year I am serving as president of the Nebraska chapter of NAEYC, so I am very aware of the good work of the organization.) See the sidebar for the complete name of the position paper. Following is a pertinent quote:

"Teaching practices associated with outdated views of literacy development and/or learning theories are still prevalent in many classrooms. Such practices include extensive whole-group instruction and intensive drill and practice on isolated skills for group or individuals. These practices, not particularly effective with primary-grade children, are even less suitable with preschool and kindergarten children. Young children especially need to be engaged in experiences that make academic content meaningful and build on prior learning."

It is vital for all children to have literacy experiences in schools and early childhood programs.... However, these school experiences must teach the broad range of language and literacy skills to provide a solid foundation on which high levels of reading and writing ultimately depend.

This is the name of the article quoted in the Director's Message:

Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children

A position statement of the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children





Healthy Reminders for Flu and Cold Season

Do not send your child if one or more of these symptoms are present:

- fresh cold
- red throat
- fever
- rash
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- wet, thick cough, or
- green, runny nose.

If your child will be absent, please notify us.

If your child needs medication while at school you will need to fill out and sign a Medication Form.

Make sure your child's teacher is aware of any medication needs.

Make sure we know how to contact at least one parent or guardian during our sessions.

Children's Activities

More About Developmentally Appropriate Practices

In our last newsletter we wrote a lot about what makes an early education program “developmentally appropriate.” One of the things that our teachers stress is that it is our job to help children acquire “tools” they can take with them for the rest of their lives. As Jennifer Brinkman wrote in her article for parents in the last newsletter, when children are asked to memorize and learn by rote, that information is quickly forgotten and doesn't provide a foundation for life-long learning.

Let me give an example of how we help children acquire “skills”: Each day all of our children (from infants to kindergartners) enjoy a “Small Group Time” where they meet with their teacher and a small group of other children to practice “tools” that are appropriate for their stage of development. Infants, for example, may be experimenting with dumping and filling, toddlers might be practicing stacking blocks, preschoolers might be learning more about cutting with scissors, and kindergartners might be practicing writing in their journals. After Small Group Time, all children have a chance to work independently or with friends in our large rooms during “Work Time.” There they choose activities of high interest, and practice the “tools” they have acquired in Small Group Time.

During an upcoming week, for example, children will be exploring the concept of sculpture in “Small Group Time.” Through experimentation, preschoolers, for example, will be learning concepts like how to change a flat piece of paper into a three-dimensional sculpture by folding, rolling or twisting the paper. (They don't know it, but they are learning principles that will help them later in life as they study geometry.) Other age groups will learn similar “tools” that they can then practice over and over on their own to their heart's content at Work Time, with teachers there to reinforce and extend the learning.

During Small Group Time teachers rotate the “tools” that are introduced, so that sometimes children are learning about letters and numbers, sometimes about visual-spatial concepts, sometimes about art principles...and on and on. The High/Scope “key experiences” for young children (a list of all the kinds of “tools” young children need to acquire at different stages of development) guide us in planning Small Group Times. Our own Dimensions research on visual-spatial learning also informs our choice of Small Group activities. In this way, children are all exposed to a broad range of experiences that help them grow up to be well-rounded people.

High/Scope® Infant and Toddler Key Experiences	Sense of Self	High/Scope® Preschool Key Experiences	Creative Representation
	Social Relations		Language and Literacy
	Creative Representation		Initiative and Social Relations
	Movement		Movement
	Music		Music
	Communication and Language		Classification
	Exploring Objects		Seriation
	Early Quantity and Number		Number
	Space		Space
	Time		Time

Thoughts for Parents

Dressing for Winter

If you send your child in snow boots, please bring shoes also. Sometimes children's feet get really warm and they want to take their boots off during the day. Since it is a fire regulation that children must have shoes on at all times, it really helps if your child has a pair of shoes to put on as an option to boots. It is also sometimes hard for children to play in the gym with snow boots on. Thanks for your help.

If Your Child Brings a Lunch

If you send foods in your child's lunch that need to be eaten with a spoon, we'd appreciate it if you could include a spoon in your child's lunch box. Also, if you send a beverage that needs to be poured into a cup, it would be great if you could pack a cup. It really helps lunch go more smoothly for children if they don't have to wait for teachers to find these items for them.

Thanks so much for your help.



Donations Update

Thank you so much to everyone who has helped with donations of materials. Any and all donations are tremendously appreciated. Remember, if you would like to donate something off our posted list, please check the Daily Information Board. Here's the donation procedure:

For Preschool: Place your donation on the shelf in the closet next to the Daily Board. If you would like, please use the paper and tape to write your name or child's name so that we know who donated.

For Infant/Toddler: Please give your

donation to your child's teacher.

We also have lots of other supplies that we are needing that are not listed on the donation board. Some are very specific and hard to put on a list, and others are bigger items. If you would like to donate money towards any of these items, you can make out a check to First-Plymouth Early Education Programs and put on the memo line what you would like the money to go towards. We appreciate any donations so very much. We are able to do so many more activities with children that we might not otherwise be able to afford.

Preschool and Discovery Days- Wish List of "Other Items"

- Big Book Easels
- Bikes for the Gym
- Climbing Cube for the Gym
- Nap Mats
- Visual/Spatial materials

Infant/Toddler – Wish List of "Other Items"

- Diaper Changing Gloves
- Wagons for the Gym
- Nap Mats
- Area rugs
- Visual/Spatial materials

Healthy Teeth for Toddlers

On Friday, February 3rd, the Toddler groups will have the opportunity to learn about brushing teeth. The idea for this Small Group Time was a suggestion from a parent who was having a hard time getting her toddler to brush her teeth. (She thought if she saw her friends doing it that maybe she would want to also.) We really appreciate Mark Johnson, who is a dentist, for agreeing

to come in and help with this. (Thanks also to Toddler teacher, Kris Hajny for setting up this activity!)



Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit

Did you work in 2004?

Do you have children?

If so, you could get up to **thousands of dollars** for you and your family!

You must file a tax return. Whether you owe income taxes or you don't, you could qualify for:

Up to **\$2,100** from the federal Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and up to **\$2,100** from the Nebraska Credit for Child and Dependent Care Expenses;

Up to **\$4,400** from the federal Earned income Credit; and

Up to **\$1,000 per child** from the federal Child Tax Credit.

Find out more today!
For more information,
and

to find out where to
get free tax preparation assistance,

call the Nebraska tax assistance hotline at

1-877-659-7870

Or dial **211**
(where available)

Donations

Preschool & Kindergarten

Needed for upcoming activities:

- ⊙ Red or Pink Construction Paper
- ⊙ Small Paper Lunch Sacks
- ⊙ Cotton Balls
- ⊙ Pom Poms

On-going Donations:

- ⊙ Hand-held Vacuums
- ⊙ CD Player

Donations

Infant & Toddler

Needed for upcoming activities:

- ⊙ Playdoh
- ⊙ Washable Tempera Fingerpaints
- ⊙ Glue Sticks

On-going Donations:

- ⊙ Hand-held Vacuums
- ⊙ Canned Fruits & Vegetables

Birthdays

Tami Britton.....Jan. 29

Amy JensenFeb. 1

Mark Your Calendars...Upcoming Events & Important Dates!

Friday, February 17

Annual Family Night (Children's Activities, Spaghetti Dinner and Basket Auction)
You'll notice that on your child's cubby a day or two ago was a note from your child's teacher about the Basket Auction. Collecting items to use in making themed baskets for our silent auction has been a fun activity each classroom enjoys in January. In your note you'll see the theme of the basket your child's teacher has chosen, and ideas for items you might choose to bring to school to add to the basket. These items range from small to large in price, so please do what is comfortable for your family. The fun is seeing how putting everything together makes exciting baskets. Our auction will have both the baskets that appeal to all ages, as well as items that are geared just to adults. Thanks so much for joining with us in this whole-school event. And...mark your calendars to attend Family Night with us!!

Friday, March 31

Annual "Family Concert and Children's Arts Festival."
Hold this Date – for our annual "Family Concert and Children's Arts Festival." This year's concert is "Sorcerer's Apprentice" with Bob Hall and the Plymouth Brass.

Thursday, March 2

Open House

Community Events Held at First-Plymouth Church Open to Everyone!

Ballroom Dancing with a Hint of Latin

Four Thursdays in February, 2, 9, 16, & 23, from 6:30-8 PM in Mayflower Hall. \$20 per person. Sign up with a partner or come solo and we'll try to match up pairs. Put on your dancing shoes and dance away the winter blues. Taught by Don & Polly Anderson (please write checks out to Polly Anderson)

Grief Recovery Workshop coming

Explore the dynamics of grief and recovery from a loss of any kind. Topics include Staying Open to Grief, Grief Recovery: How Does it Work? Confusion About Stages, When Is It Time to Begin to Recover? Myths about Dealing with Grief, Not Knowing What to Say, and Participating in Your Own Recovery. Nine Tuesdays, April 18, 25, May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, June 6, 13 from 7-8:30 PM, Calvert Parlor. Cost \$50, includes workbook. Led by Becky Walkowiak, RN, LMHP and Laurie Reinsch, LMHP.

In & Around Our Community

Pioneers Park Free Hikes

Jan. 28-29: Hibernation Investigation

Feb. 4-5: Winter Woods Walk

2006 Open Harvest Cooking Classes

You may register at Open Harvest or with a credit card by phone, 475-9069. Your payment secures your seat. No walk-ins, please. 1618 South St., Lincoln, NE, (402) 475-9069.

Jan. 28: Intro to Natural Foods... for those new to Natural Foods, or just wanting to learn more about them, this free class is for you. Meet at Open Harvest for a detailed store tour with Jackie Barnhardt, Outreach Educator. Lots of samples! FREE! Class at Open Harvest, 8-9AM.

Feb. 6: NEW! Feeding your Fussy Kids... Are your kids picky eaters? Kris Bohling offers some practical ideas to make eating healthy food more fun for your family. Kris works at Open Harvest and cooks for his fussy kids and will offer ways to help your kids like the food you cook. Samples and vegetarian-friendly recipes included. Class will be held at 6:30 to 8:30pm at Trinity United Methodist Church 16th and A Streets, in Lincoln. \$15/member-owners; \$20/non-member-owners.

Newsletters and Program information can be found on-line ...
www.firstplymouth.org or dimensionsfoundation.org