

March 2016 News!

March has arrived and shown us a variety of weather. As I write this a bit delayed newsletter, we are all awaiting to see if we will wake up to a bit of snow in the morning. What happened to the 60 degree weather that we experienced just last weekend. Hopefully, that will return to us rather quickly! The children have loved the temperatures that are warming up and getting back into the routine of going outside on a daily basis, not to mention the teachers love it too!

During the month of February we had on of our annual in-service days. While the day was cut a little short due to the snow - the teachers all did a great deal of learning. Our staff was very helpful in easing the others in our district with the transition of going to Tadpoles as a daily communication tool for parents. In addition to the Tadpoles talk they were introduced to a more comprehensive way of completing child portfolios which we will be starting to implement soon, classroom management, organization and implementing our LTL curriculum in a more effective way were all hot topics on this cold blustery day. It is so wonderful to have these events for the teachers to have the chance to collaborate with others in our educational committee.

Each year during our February in-service the staff at each school are asked to vote for a Teacher of the Year candidate. To qualify as a candidate the elected teachers must have been employed in the school for at least a year, have no disciplinary actions, be a full time employee, and show an exemplar understanding as well as the implementation of the Links to Learning Curriculum. As a school we were very excited to announce that Stacey Weaver in our Beginner Classroom was elected by her co-workers as being our Teacher of the Year. Stacey now has the opportunity to proceed forward in the competition and has become a candidate to be the National Teacher of the Year for our corporation, Nobel Learning Communities, Inc. We will keep you posted on her progress! If she is elected as Teacher of the Year for our company, she will have a chance to attend the annual Principal's Conference in Las Vegas Nevada, during the month of October. Congratulations and Good Luck Miss Stacey!

Early bird registration has ended! Thank you for those of you who participated in this special offer. As a school we are pleased to share that 80% of our current families have chosen to re-enroll with us next year. We are very sad that some of you will be moving away, aging out of our program or will be going to public school outside of our district. If you are one of these families that will not be joining us for whatever reason - please don't forget about us! We love to receive letters, pictures and e-mail updates of how everyone is doing! We are so please to share that about 90% of our families from the Royersford Chesterbrook Academy will be merging with us in June. Think of all the new friends and families that we will be welcoming! Over the next few months as we host family events and staff meetings we will be inviting our merging families and staff to join us. Please help us make these families and staff feel welcome in our school by

introducing yourself to them. We will be looking for ways to help them become acclimated to our environment over the next few months. We would love for your assistance and patience as we could experience some difficult mornings of transition times. We all remember how hard it is for our "first day" of a new job, school or even dropping your child off at a new school, please help us help them.

Have a great month of March...let's hope it came in like the Lion....and will be leaving us like a very tame lamb with sunny skies and warmer temperatures!

Donna Baus
Principal

Introducing Your Preschooler to the Fascinating World of Non-Fiction

When you think about children's books, you might envision princesses in castles, talking animals or a flying magic school bus. Although it's fun to read these types of stories with your child, it's important to also introduce him to non-fiction books. You may be surprised to learn that he's fascinated with exploring real people, places and things! Non-fiction is not only interesting to children, but it also creates an important foundation for learning. It helps children build new vocabulary, develop critical thinking skills, fuel their curiosity and gain a better understanding about the world around them.

Below are ways we integrate non-fiction in the classroom, as well as activities you can try at home.



INFANTS:

In the classroom: Infants love to look at faces, so our teachers choose non-fiction books that include photographs of people, such as *Global Babies* by Global Fund for Children. Afterward, they show the baby a photo of his own family and talk about the people in the photo. For example, "Look, Ben. Here's your mom. Who's she holding? That's you."

At home: Read multi-sensory picture books with your child. Choose non-fiction books with different textures and bright colors to help stimulate his growing sensory awareness.

Recommended reading: *Families* by Rena D. Grossman, *Bathtime (Baby Touch & Feel)* by DK Publishing

TODDLERS (ages 1-2):

In the classroom: Toddlers learn the names of different animals and vehicles and the sounds they make. While singing songs with students, our teachers ask, "What does a pig say?" or "What sound does a fire truck make?"

At home: Point out photographs of familiar animals and vehicles in magazines or books. Ask your child to mimic the noise that each item makes. This can also be done in the car as you're driving around your neighborhood.

Recommended reading: *Baby Animals* by National Geographic Kids, *Noisy Trucks* by Tiger Tales

BEGINNERS (ages 2-3):

In the classroom: Teachers and students read non-fiction books by going on picture walks. A picture walk motivates children to rely on pictorial clues to decipher the story's plot and make predictions. Before reading the story, they flip through the book, and the child is encouraged to make predictions about the characters and plot. The teacher then reads the book aloud to the student. When finished, the teacher asks questions to start a conversation about the text.

At home: Visit a library with your child, and let him choose a book. Take a picture walk through the book with him. When you're finished, ask the librarian to recommend a non-fiction book about the same topic. For example, if you read *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, your child might also be interested in *Puppies, Puppies, Puppies*, a non-fiction book by Susan Meyers.

Recommended reading: *My First Baseball Book* by Sterling Children's, *Everything Spring* by Jill Esbaum

INTERMEDIATES (ages 3-4):

In the classroom: Our Intermediate teachers combine non-fiction reading with dramatic play. After reading a book about farm life, children create their own farm in the dramatic play center and pretend to be farmers. Children gain a better understanding of the book, practice problem solving skills, and use new vocabulary.

At home: Select a book with large photographs or illustrations. Flip through the book, and let your child stop on pages that interest him. Don't worry about reading every page. Ask him to tell you what is going on in the pictures, and encourage him to make comparisons to experiences he's had in real life. For example, if you pick a book about weather, you might ask, "Where do we go in the summertime when it's hot?" or "Why do we use an umbrella in the springtime?"

Recommended reading: *Watching the Seasons* by Edana Eckart, *Wings* by Melanie Mitchell

PRE-K/PRE-K2 (ages 4-5):

In the classroom: Our older preschoolers read a non-fiction book paired with a fiction book, and compare and contrast the two stories. After reading *Stella Luna* and *Bat Loves the Night*, the teacher might ask, "In *Stella Luna*, the bat slept upright. Is that how a real bat sleeps?" Students may also create a Venn diagram that shows similarities and differences in the two books.

At home: Read various forms of non-fiction with your child, including books, brochures and flyers. Challenge him to find sight words in the text. Afterward, ask him to write in his journal what he would like to learn about next. Use that information when choosing another piece of non-fiction.

Recommended reading: *Diary of a Worm* by Doreen Cronin (fiction), *Wonderful Worms* by Linda Glaser (non-fiction)

By introducing children to both fiction and non-fiction texts in the preschool years, they become comfortable with a wide range of subjects and acquire the skills needed to comprehend important information in kindergarten and beyond. They are better able to tap into their interests and enjoy learning about real world people, places and things.

- Lauren Starnes, PhD – Director of Early Childhood Education