



## April 2019 News

Instead of March Madness, we had March Mad Scientist-ness. We had fun with both physics and space. With *Magnets and Static Electricity*, we learned about opposing poles. With magnets, the poles are north and south and either they like each other and attract or don't and repel. With static, it works very much the same way, as opposites attract and like energy pulls away. We began our *Space Unit* with concepts that are out of this world! We live in space! Really, we do! We discussed gravity and how it works, and we became the solar system and orbited, revolved and rotated around the sun.

In March the heavy emphasis of science dominated all subjects. In Language Arts, the students journaled, "What would you do without electricity?" and worked on penmanship and alliteration of the letters Nn, Mm and Hh. We also emphasized and listened for the rhyming sounds -art, -ace and -ar. For math, we integrated the science themes into activities that stressed estimation. We had the opportunity to estimate the number of stars on a piece of paper and the number of paper clips a magnet would pick up. With the latter, we discussed how the outcome could be different with each try and how other variables, like the size and shape of the magnet, could change the outcome of this estimation. We also practiced writing the numbers 15, 16 and 17 and observed the value of each number.

One of the highlights in March was the wonderful presentation of *The Gruffalo!* The kids worked hard and had a great time sharing this with you.



### Dates to Remember

**April 19**

PreK Parent-Teacher Conferences for kids going into Kindergarten  
No School  
(Preschool conferences will be held May 28)

**April 20**

Family Field Trip 10AM  
Space Foundation  
(DT will pay the entrance fee for students)

**April 22**

Earth Day Celebration  
The Lorax



**May 24**

10<sup>th</sup> Annual Luau 12 Noon  
Last Day of School

**May 28**

Preschool Conferences



# Looking Ahead to April

Spring has finally sprung, or so the calendar says, and we are all looking forward to warmer weather. Spring also means we will be enjoying some great themes and activities for the month of April. After one more week for our *Space Theme* (due to weather) we will head into our life cycle themes of Bats and then Arachnids. These creatures are sometimes thought of as creepy, but after we are done, we will all know the benefits of these wonderful beings in our lives. In these units, we will learn the life cycle of each of these critters and understand how they help our environment. We will look at things like echolocation, web spinning and the eating habits of both the bat and the spider.



## Language Arts

- Writing fact and fiction
- Practicing fine motor skills by creating and weaving webs
- Learning the sound and proper way to write Vv, Yy, Ww and Xx
- Listening for the patterns in word families -air, -ash, -et and -ine
- Re-enact *Why Bat has No Friends*
- Class Book: *Astronaut, Astronaut, What Do You See?*

## Science

- Color Changing Milk Experiment
- Experimenting with Toys Astronauts tried in Space
- Discovering the life cycles of bats and arachnids
- Understanding echolocation
- Investigating the developmental stages of the spider
- Knowing the difference between nocturnal and diurnal

## Math

- Introducing 17, 18, 19 and 20
- Sun Ray Math
- Making fruit patterns
- Charts: Are you afraid of Bats? Spiders?

## Social

- Cooperating with peers to make a group bat
- Bat/Moth Game
- Find bat outside using knowledge learned
- My "bat" family
- Astronaut Training!



## Specials News

### PE (Physical Education)

Can't wait for the warmer weather to enjoy more PE outside. For the month of April, we will be practicing a Spatial Awareness. To support this, we will do several activities. We will do group dancing moving over and under, do line runs, enjoy obstacle courses where we will crawl in, sit on and go under objects. We will also play directional games moving forward, backward, over and across. Hula Hoop Games and a game called Lions and Bears will also be played. ~Ms. Freeland

### Sign Language

During March we learned signs for question words and practiced asking each other questions about food, animals, and vehicles. This led to curiosity about toy signs. It was fun learning signs for common toys and playing games with them. Games such as Spin the Bottle and Roll the Beach Ball helped us use question signs and review the color signs. The changing of the seasons gave us an opportunity to review weather and season signs. Practicing school/classroom signs has given us more signs we can use as part of our daily routine. Combining our signs with songs such as: "The Seasons Song", "Where is Thumbkin", and "The Leprechaun Song" is also something we enjoyed. Next month, we will learn signs for household and neighborhood words. ~ Mrs. Draper

### Music

This month the students enjoyed watching the Star Wars theme played by an orchestra and listening to the musical story, Peter and the Wolf. We talked about beat being the 'heartbeat' of music and learned that different instruments can keep the beat in a song or piece of music. It was fun trying different instruments as we created different types of beats. One game we did this with was called, Pass the Beat, in which students created a beat and passed it on to the next student using different percussion instruments. We also had fun playing homemade drums and instruments to the beats of different instrumental pieces. Marching as we played instruments to the tune of "When the Band Comes Marching In" was definitely entertaining. Next month we will be learning about feelings in music and dance, as well as how to play a music circle game called, "Ti-de-oo". ~ Mrs. Draper

### Art/Drama

March started out like a lion in Drama with their beautiful rendition of The Gruffalo! The kids really worked hard and were so proud of themselves for what they accomplished. We can all agree what a wonderful job they did being the mouse, foxes, owls, snakes and the Gruffalo himself. The rest of March was about "stamping" with various materials and creating art by using things other than paint brushes. In April, Mrs. Priest will be away much of the month but Mrs. Ruth, our retired Art/Drama teacher from years past, will be in to prepare the students for the annual Luau with hula dances and songs. ~ Mrs. Priest

### Hands-On S.T.E.A.M.

STEAM was limited in March due to weather and Spring Break. However, the kids did get to participate in the Lego Challenge and practice balance with Balancing Robots. April STEAM will be all about Spring. The students will enjoy creating a Spring marble maze, painting with feathers to go along with the book *Birds* by Kevin Henkes, building with plastic eggs and playdoh and doing various activities with PEEPS! ~Ms. Baker



Please do not forget to mark your child's items that come to school with his or her name. This is especially important with water bottles. Children don't always know their own bottle and many look similar or are identical to others. We have had children accidentally drink from someone else's water bottle. Some children do not recognize their own water bottles and without names, we cannot help them. The health department does require that lunchboxes and water bottles have both a child's first and last name. Jackets, gloves, mittens, hats and boots should also be marked with names so no one accidentally brings home someone else's belongings.

## Jackets

As we all know, Colorado weather W-E-I-R-D! During Spring we can have beautiful weather one day and snow the next (or one hour and the next). We can also have a forecast of 75 degrees, yet it only gets up to 55. Please, please be sure your child has a jacket/sweater each day. If it is warm, we will not use it, but oftentimes when the forecast calls for a nice warm day, it is still chilly at our 10AM recess time. State regulations require children to have a jacket or sweater if the temperature outside is below room temperature. We consider this 68 degrees. We use the temperature at 10AM to guide us, not what the high temperature is supposed to be for the day.

## Sunscreen:

It is that time of year again...please remember to apply sunscreen on your child every day before school. Please check your child's sunscreen for amount and expiration date as well as your child's first AND last name. Include your initials on the sign in/out sheet verifying you have put sunscreen on your child before school. We will apply additional sunscreen on your child if we spend extended time outdoors.

ABC May 9<sup>th</sup> ABC

End of Alphabet Party!

More Information to Come!



The Annual Luau is a tradition for Discovery Trails to celebrate the last day of school recognizing the end of a wonderful school year. The children will be learning hula dances and Hawaiian songs for your entertainment pleasure! Our retired art/drama teacher, Mrs. Ruth, will be here in April to help us learn our moves :-D. As the last day (quickly) approaches, there will be more information to come. Aloha!



## Discovery Trails' Educational Philosophy

Discovery Trails develops curriculum based on state standards in Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Skills for young learners. Within the fundamentals of these guidelines we modify instruction to meet the needs of the students basing this on skill, motivation and learning style. Our goal is an environment that is established on a combination of a few educational philosophies, but the majority of it is progressivism.

Progressivism is a child-directed, educational philosophy that emphasizes developing personal meaning through hands-on, activity-based, experiential teaching and learning. In contrast, traditional learning, or essentialism, is an authoritarian approach to learning. It involves memorization and repetition. What we do at Discovery Trails is a process that involves students internalizing and understanding the emergence of new information through experimenting, questioning, and yes, playing during the lesson.

We encourage students to think. Rather than leading children to a particular answer, we allow students to develop their own ideas and pathways. Our day begins with a lesson in which all activities during the course of the day support. We integrate all subjects on the ideas that are presented during our morning group time. The lesson is presented and then activities are designed to support the concept through play, assignments and other endeavors. Children do not always remember what has been said, but they do remember what they did. Our themes are created to bring excitement into learning and to be a vehicle for the concepts needed to be learned for success in elementary school.

Because of this, Discovery Trails' goal is for students to love school and learning. We take students from where they are emotionally, socially and academically and help them grow with fun, interesting and dynamic activities with support of their individual learning plans. We hope that the love of learning is the motivation for students to try new things, to learn innovated concepts and to enjoy the quest for knowledge.

