

# March 2019 News

The month of February was short in days but not short on fun! We had several special events that kept us on our toes from our Valentine's Day Party to the Millibo Art Theatre visit to the vocals of the Colorado Springs Children's Chorale quartet to Pirate Day, we hardly had a chance to catch our breath.

The children finished up the *Authors Theme* with a focus on Robert Munsch and David Wiesner. During the week of Munsch the children enjoyed reading stories with humor. This was supported by including creating costumes out of paper bags, wearing specific colors to school, sporting wacky hair and showing off crazy socks. While studying David Wiesner, the students were able to use their imagination and "read" stories through pictures. They then wrote their own story using only the pictures they drew.

We then moved on to our *Performing Arts Unit*. The children learned that the Performing Arts are anything that entertains other people. They discovered this can be juggling, dancing, singing, making people laugh and so much more. We enjoyed learning about different types of dance and watched Gene Kelly dance with Jerry the Mouse in *Anchor's Aweigh*, viewed scenes from *Singin' in the Rain* and observed hula dances, hip hop, tap, break dancing and so many more. The children were also exposed to musical instruments and musical scores that tell a story. In the middle of all this the kids have been rehearsing and preparing for their roles in *The Gruffalo*. The children will present this story March 8th at 11:00AM. Pizza lunch will follow.



## Dates to Remember

**March 1**

**Pirate Day**

(to support the letter Rrrrr-Arrrrrgh!)

**March 15**

**Make a Class Leprechaun Trap!**

**March 25-29**

Spring Break - No School

**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)





## Looking Ahead to March

Our March themes are very science-based. We will be learning about *Magnets and Static Electricity* and then launching into *Space* (see what we did here?). Experiments and hands on learning will be the focus to make these concepts real for the children and instill a sense of wonder.

Why is science important for children?

1. Children are born scientists as they learn to relate to the world around them
2. Science is part of our everyday life from cooking to playing ball
3. Science teaches children to observe, gather information and draw reasonable conclusions
4. Children who have a basic understanding of science are more receptive to new technologies and ideas in the future that can stimulate research, development and businesses (Mini Me Geology, N.A).

### Language Arts

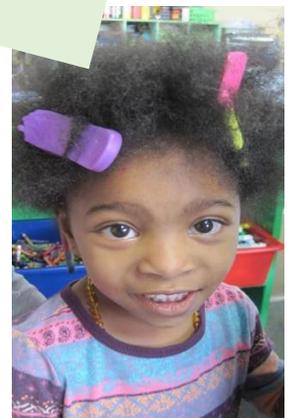
- Alliterating Nn, Mm, Hh
- Rhyming -un, -ar, -art
- Drawing and writing observations
- Creating imaginary machines after reading *Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel*

### Math

- Estimating the number of stars on a paper
- How many paper clips did the magnet pick up?
- Telling time with a sundial
- Eyes on an Alien math

### Science

- Understanding attracting and repelling
- Discovering our solar system
- Analyzing how craters are made
- Observing thrust in action as we send up paper rockets.
- Finding our place in space
- Examining gravity
- Rotating and revolving
- Making star tubes
- Experimenting with static electricity
- Seeing the phases of the moon
- Orienteering



# Specials News

## PE (Physical Education)

So many storms, so many days of indoor PE. Good thing February's focus was on dexterity and control and easily attainable with inside activities. Dexterity is the ability to isolate finger movements. Preschool children use less arm and hand movements to cut with scissors, fasten buttons and zip zippers and copy letters, numbers and shapes as they develop these small muscles in their hand. To support this, we dropped clothespins into a jar from various heights, played Operation, enjoyed Heart Tag, spun coins, popped bubbles and made a jungle obstacle course. In March we will practice flexibility with tumbling, kicking like donkeys, doing the bean bag crawl, playing animal action, making body shapes and hula hooping. ~Ms. Freeland

## Music

During February we finished our Music Dynamics unit as we talked about tone and notes on the solfege. We began our instruments unit and have been talking about the four instrument families- woodwinds, percussion, strings and brass. We have been learning how the instruments sound, what makes the sound, and what they look like. When the students charted the instruments we have at school, they learned that most of Discovery Trails' instruments belong to the percussion family. Next month we will continue learning about instruments, see how they can be used in musical stories like: *Peter and the Wolf*, and practice keeping the beat. ~ Mrs. Draper

## Art/Drama

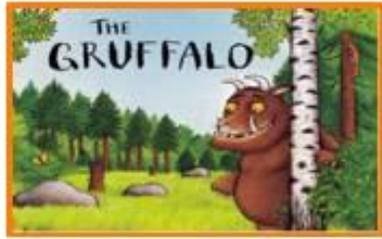
Enjoying the "drama" part of Art and Drama, the students have been preparing for *The Gruffalo*. The children have been re-enacting the story. learning a descriptive song creating the set/background. Through drama, children learn self-confidence, the art of speaking so others can hear and the ability to work well with others. The students have learned the way to thank someone who entertains them (clap) and the way to say, "you're welcome" (bow). We all look forward to sharing this experience with you on March 8<sup>th</sup>. ~ Mrs. Priest

## Sign Language

This month we have been busy working on sports, technology, and question signs. Some of the games we played to help us learn the signs included Sports Tic-Tac-Toe and Concentration. The students practiced asking questions as they asked their friends to come play a certain sport with them. They also made sentences as they told us what their favorite movie was. Singing songs such as, "1, 2 Buckle My Shoe" and "Old McDonald Had a Farm" is one of the fun ways we enjoyed reviewing our number and animal signs. Next month we will be learning signs for transportation words. ~ Mrs. Draper

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

Last month in STEAM we used Valentine's Day as a basis for fun. We used a Roll and Cover Heart Game for math and built Conversation Heart Towers (engineering) and discovered coding while making coding bracelets that represent our names. In March, we will use physics to support engineering with Balancing Robots and doing the Lego Challenge. ~Ms. Baker



Mrs. Priest and the  
DT Players Present:

## THE GRUFFALO

Friday March 8<sup>th</sup> 11:00AM

Pizza Lunch for Parents, Theatre Crew and Actors  
to follow.

See you there!

Please RSVP if more than two adults will be attending so we can order enough pizza!

## Dressing for Outdoor Play



Just another reminder about appropriate outdoor Winter wear. Please, please provide you children with a Winter coat, hat/hood and gloves/mittens. The temperature on our playground at 10am is much lower than the high temperature at three in the afternoon. We spend about 40 minutes outdoors during recess daily and then on Tuesdays and Fridays, there is an additional 30 minutes outdoors for PE. When the temperature is only 25-40 degrees, children's ears and hands do get cold.

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.

# Emergent Reading and Writing

Writing Print plays an integral role in society and serves many purposes. So does it in an early childhood environment. Children learn that print has meaning when they see their name on their cubby and listen to wonderful stories. Literacy builds language knowledge that research has shown will lead to better reading outcomes later in life (Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling and Miller-Johnson, 2002). Because of this, emergent writing is a priority for our classroom at Discovery Trails. There are several stages in the journey of a writer that begins at birth. There is no age when children are “ready to read and write” but they do go through particular phases in their development to writing. Rushing through a stage or skipping a stage has detrimental long lasting effects and each stage needs guidance and support.

1. **Scribbling:** This stage of writing begins somewhere between 2-4 years of age as a child begins using writing utensils to make marks and circles on paper. As children begin to leave this stage, the marks become more purposeful and the child can tell others what his or her picture is all about.
2. **Preschematic:** When scribbling begins to be more representational children are in this stage. Children begin to draw pictures that have characteristics of what they are trying to draw. They begin to show a connection between their thinking and what they are illustrating and can see the relationships between objects like drawing the daddy bigger than the baby.
3. **Writing through Drawing:** The author begins to put thoughts and ideas onto paper. The pictures often tell a story or reflect an experience. This stage is important in the development of reading because “emergent readers believe that adults and teachers read pictures, not words” (Sulzby, 1985).
4. **Writing through Letter-like Forms:** Children begin to understand that writing is different from drawing pictures and they start to create letter-like forms on paper to convey ideas. Random strings of letters are often seen at this time along with “pretend” cursive.
5. **Writing through Inventive Spelling:** At this stage, young children begin using their knowledge of the alphabet to write. They start matching sounds to letters they write testing different ways a word can be spelled. At this stage, it is important for children to explore and hypothesize as they make this transition. Over time, and this era varies, children begin to gravitate to more conventional spelling. During this phase one can expect children to: a. String a list of letters together to form a “word” b. Depend on letter names for sounds like writing “MT” for empty. c. Vowel sounds are either non-existent, like when a child writes “KT” for cat, or there is some effort to add vowels, when a child writes “fet” for feet. d. Children start to understand that sometimes a combination of letters make a sound like sh and th. Children may write “chie” for try.
6. **Conventional Spelling:** As children begin to read more they begin to understand that certain letters in a certain order make the same word every time. Children start learning how to spell words for spelling tests and they will often ask how to spell a word correctly.

Each stage of emergent writing is important and has meaning for the development of writing and reading skills. As teachers, we actually “read” a child’s drawing because to the child it is very intentional. When we can’t “read” it, we ask the child to read it to us. Emergent writing activities are the best way to connect thinking with writing capturing a child’s thoughts on paper.

Here are some ways you can encourage your child to “write” at home.

- Create a designated space for your child to write
- Offer a display area for your child to show off his or her work

• Offer lots of writing materials to encourage experimentation:

- Pencils and Colored Pencils
- Crayons
- Thick and Thin Markers
- Pens
- Rubber Stamps and Ink Pads
- Special Paper
- Tape
- Child-appropriate Scissors
- Envelopes
- Leftover Holiday/Birthday Cards
- Chalk and Chalk Board
- Dry Erase Board and Markers
- Magazines for Cutting Have Fun!!

Campbell, F.A., Ramey, C.T., Pungello, E.P., Sparling, J., & Miller-Johnson, S. (2002). Early childhood education: Young adult outcomes from the Abecedarian project. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6Sulzby, E. (1985a). Children's emergent reading of favorite storybooks: A developmental study. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 20

