

ECC Times

January 2007

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER AT THE ROCHESTER SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

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Dear Parents,

As we welcome 2007, I look forward to a year filled with health, love and happiness. I'm confident that you will also experience wonder and pride in your children and all that they will accomplish as they grow and learn this year.

December was a busy month here in ECC. I'm sure it was also busy for you at home with the holidays. It was nice to see so many of you at our "Breakfast with Santa" on the 20th of December. My heart-felt thanks to all who helped with that celebration, especially Pat Sullivan and Lisa DeWindt-Sommer. They once again did an outstanding job as Santa and Rudolph. Thanks to the parents who stayed for the curriculum overview afterwards. The Creative Curriculum is a wonderful tool for our staff here and I do want to ensure that as many of you as possible gain an awareness of it. Other December events included a field trip by Peggy Mudd's class to The Garden Factory to learn more about plants, trees and decorations for the holidays. The giant train and winter scene on display there fascinated her class and in the classroom Peggy, Kathleen and Tina were able to build on that experience in a number of ways. Once again Susan Searls presented to many of our preschoolers about Hanukah, showing them beautiful Menorahs and explaining their significance, as well as the meaning of other symbols used during that holiday.

So far January has been filled with activities, many of them related to winter fun. Since we haven't had a lot of snow so far this season, the teachers have been most creative! Julie Shahin, Angela Burrows, Niki McKeown and their preschoolers are enjoying the winter fun.... They made a snowman indoors instead of outside! The class then voted and named him Vanilla. Poor Vanilla did not last long. Nevertheless, learning continued with the students sequencing pictures of snowmen melting and looking into why poor Vanilla didn't last very long! These preschoolers will now be working on making soap snowmen as well as winter animals.

The 3 year-olds in our F.I.R.S.T. program are now coming to school 5 days per week instead of 3. They seem to have adjusted to the increase in the number of days quite well. Of course, the rest of us are happy to have them here the additional days!

The Shared Reading Program is moving along and we hope to begin visits next month. Tutors will be trained this month so they should be ready to go fairly soon. A letter with a more detailed description of what the program involves will be coming your way as well.

(Continued on page 2)

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Dates to Remember:

Monday, January 15th -MLK day (no school)

Friday, January 26th - Second Quarter of School ends (Report Cards will be sent home the following week)

Thursday, Friday and Saturday, February 8th, 9th and 10th - RSD hosts the ESDAA Boys' Basketball Tournament (school in session on that Thursday and Friday)

Monday, February 12th - President Lincoln's birthday (school in session)

Wednesday, February 14th - Valentine's Day (school in session)

Thursday, Friday and Saturday, February 15th, 16th and 17th - RSD hosts the ESDAA Girls' Basketball Tournament (school in session on that Thursday and Friday)

Monday, February 19th - President's Day (RSD closed)

Monday, February 19th through Friday, February 23rd - Mid-Winter Recess (RSD closed).

Please remember that no food or drinks are allowed in the vans or buses. Eating and drinking while the driver is concentrating on driving, especially in winter weather conditions can be hazardous so please do not send drinks or food with your child in the mornings.

The next Parent Information Night is planned for Wednesday, January 17th. Stacy Barry, one of our Speech/Communication teachers, is planning to present on techniques she and others here in ECC use to improve oral-motor functioning as well as carryover of language skills into the classroom and the home. Another Parent Night is being planned for the end of February/beginning of March led by Ron Rood, our ASL Teacher. Please be thinking of any questions/topics you may have for Ron. In addition to these two evenings, please consider joining Kelly Luke and Angela Burrows on Friday mornings twice a month for morning get-togethers. Look for flyers outlining topics to be presented/discussed in these hour-long sessions. Those who participate in these ECC get togethers have reported them to be quite helpful both in getting to know other parents as well as to learn new things.

Enjoy the rest of the month (and the articles in this month's newsletter). I hope to see you around school!

Sincerely,
Marilyn



"Teachers believe that they have a gift for giving; it drives them with the same irrepressible drive that drives others to create a work of art or a market or a building."
A. Bartlett Giamatti

Ready to Learn



Resolve to make 2007 a year of learning for your family

January is a time to think about habits—breaking bad ones and starting good ones. Or you can decide to start a great one—the habit of learning.

The habit of learning benefits your entire family. It's easy to establish—you use things you probably already have at home, such as crayons and paper. And it doesn't take much time. One learning activity each day—just a few minutes a day for about a month—is all it takes to get your whole family in the learning groove for good.

Here are some learning activity ideas to get you started:

- * **Have a family reading night.** Do it often, since reading is the foundation for most kinds of learning. Let your child look at a favorite book while you read something you enjoy. After 10 minutes or so, ask your child to tell you about his book. Then read it to him.
- * **Build visual and spatial skills** with puzzles and patterns. Help your child put together some simple jigsaw puzzles. Demonstrate patterns. Get out some coins and place a penny, then a nickel, then a penny, on the table. See if he can tell you what should be next.
- * **Write notes.** This may be a good time to thank someone for a December holiday gift. Your child can tell you what he wants to say, and then draw a picture and (if he can) sign his name.
- * **Practice math** at mealtimes. Say, "Here is one grape. Here are two more. (Place the other two grapes on the opposite end of his plate.) Now how many do you have?" Show your child how the two halves of his sandwich are rectangles (or triangles). What shape do they make when you fit them together? What shape is the bottom of his drinking glass?
- * **Have a craft challenge.** With your child, find things around the house to reuse for a project. He can decorate grocery bags to create gift-wrap. He can cover cans to turn them into pencil holders.

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Expanding Your Child's World



Remember that your preschooler will thrive on simple pleasures

Have you ever marveled at your child's delight in going for a car ride? Have you seen her create something from a cardboard paper towel roll and tape, while expensive toys sit untouched? That's because preschoolers love to imagine and pretend, and don't need anything too fancy to be happy.

Keep this in mind when you are looking for things to do with your child. After the excitement and stimulation of December, your child may especially crave simple pleasures this month.

Here are a few ideas to try with your child:

- * **Feed the birds.** Hang pinecones rolled in peanut butter and then sesame seeds in a nearby tree. Watch feathered friends gather.
- * **Make snowballs** and look at ice crystals, if you live in a cold climate—or splash in puddles, if you're in a warmer one. Dress for the weather and keep safety in mind.
- * **Have scavenger hunts.** Your child can search for things near home—a rock, a twig, a leaf from a tree that always stays green. Or while traveling—see who can be the first to spot a blue car, a red sign and a white house or building.

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Reading Readiness



Play games based on the books you read with your preschooler

When preschoolers are encouraged to enjoy books, they're more likely to become better readers. Research supports this time and time again.

Playing games based on the books you read makes reading more enjoyable. It gives your child a deeper understanding of a book's words, story and characters. It can develop important skills, too—art, arithmetic and creativity.

Try these ideas with picture books:

- * **Have your child count**—or count with you—the dots, ducks or other items on a page.
- * **Find a certain letter or word.** Tell your child to point to each “O” on a page, for example.
- * **Draw pictures** to continue the story. Ask your child, “What do you think happens next?” Give her paper and crayons to draw new scenes.
- * **Pick a word on a page.** Ask your child to come up with words that rhyme with it. Help her get started—“at, cat, bat.” Made-up words work, too!
- * **Encourage your child** to pretend she's the main character—either during reading or when finished. She can jump or act scared to show what happened in the book.

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Building Math Skills



Build your child's observation skills by creating charts, graphs

Your child will use math to work with charts and graphs at school. With a little help from you, your child can use his observation skills (and his crayons) to create and understand simple charts and graphs.

Here are two to try:

1. **A daily weather chart.** Help your child make a calendar. A square for each day of the month, drawn on a big sheet of construction paper works well. Write the day of the week and the date on the top of each square. Example: Sunday 1, Monday 2. Each day, show your child the square. Read the day and date. Have him draw a picture of the day's weather (a sun, a cloud, a raindrop) underneath.
2. **A survey.** Pick a question, such as, “What is your favorite pet?” Have your child draw a dog, cat and goldfish at the top of a piece of paper. Leave space between each animal, and space underneath. Then have him ask family and friends which animal they like best. Each time a person picks that animal, have him draw a smile underneath it. See which animal ends up with the most smiles.

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