



THE STARS April/May 2010 NEWSLETTER

YOGA TIME!

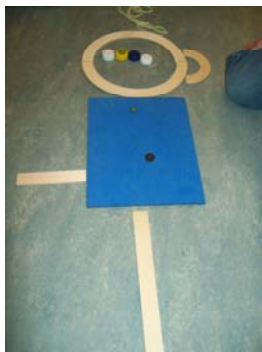
The Stars have been practicing their yoga moves and breathing exercises every Friday morning. We begin with the Bunny Breath, a breathing pattern that helps wake us up before we begin our movements. We then begin different body positions that work to increase our strength and flexibility. The Stars love to create their own yoga positions and enjoy demonstrating and teaching their individual positions to the entire class. At the end of yoga, we lay still for a few seconds, positioning our bodies like a rock, which is silent and still. We then complete our yoga time with a Snake Breath, where we take a deep breath in and exhale slowly and smoothly, making a hissing sound to let the breath out. This helps us to slow down and calm our bodies before we move on to the next exciting classroom activity!



MEET MAT MAN!

During April, the Stars were introduced to "Mat Man." Mat Man is a part of the *Handwriting Without Tears* Program. Children use wooden pieces and a blue mat to create the Mat Man figure. They use big lines, little lines, big curves, and little curves when assembling Mat Man. This floor activity develops body awareness, position concepts, and pre-drawing skills.

The Mat Man activity is also a lesson in listening and singing as the children wait for their turn to add a body part. Turn-taking is an important skill in social interaction. One day during work time, one of the Stars constructed a Mat Man Monster!



Stars' favorite books for April and May:

1. *Monster Math*
by Grace Maccarone
2. *Snappy Little Dinosaurs*
by Dugald Steer
3. *Glad Monster, Sad Monster*
by Ed Emberley & Anne Miranda
4. *Ten Wiggly, Wiggly Caterpillars*
by Debbie Tarbett

Song of the month:

"Down by the Bay" by Raffi

Down by the bay
where the watermelons grow
Back to my home
I dare not go
For if I do
My mother will say:
"Did you ever see a bear
combing his hair?"
Down by the bay.

Down by the bay
where the watermelons grow
Back to my home
I dare not go
For if I do
My mother will say:
"Did you ever see a bee with a
sunburned knee?"
Down by the bay.

Down by the bay
where the watermelons grow
Back to my home
I dare not go
For if I do
my mother will say:
"Did you ever see a moose
kissing a goose?"
Down by the bay.



PRETEND PLAY

Recently, the Stars have been showing a greater interest in the pretend area of our classroom. They enjoy cooking and playing with the baby dolls. During work time, some of the Stars have been pretending to have a birthday party and a picnic at the beach. They play in the kitchen area and pretend to bake cakes, cookies, and cupcakes. Not only are the Stars baking delicious "strawberry cake," "chocolate cake," "rum cake," or "special worm cake," they have also been making party hats to re-create birthday parties. Children use their imaginations to deepen their understanding of the world they live in. They also learn to cooperate and problem solve with one another. Most importantly, pretend play helps children to develop abstract thought.

What you can do at home: You can encourage the same kind of pretend play at home by providing simple representational props. A box can become a fire truck, a train, or a spaceship. Collect some old clothes you can use to dress-up. Not only will children learn important skills but you also are spending priceless time with them!



ADVENTURES AT THE PLAYGROUND

As soon as the warm weather arrived, the Stars returned to the Asphalt Green playground and Ruppert Park. The playgrounds provide opportunities for the Stars to use and strengthen their gross motor skills by running, climbing, and jumping.

Recently, the Stars have gravitated towards the sandbox at the Asphalt Green playground. In September the Stars decorated their own sand buckets so we decided to bring them back for the Stars to play with. In the sandbox, the children get to scoop, dig, pour, shovel, and build. Sand can inspire children to work together to construct sandcastles and sculptures. The sandbox also allows for great opportunities to support language development. Children expand their vocabularies as they learn words like grainy, soft, and sprinkle.

The Stars also enjoy the swings, playing "chase," and sliding down the slide. The Stars often pretend that the play structure is a "spaceship" or a "pirate ship."



CREEPY CRAWLING THINGS

The Stars have become very interested in insects. They have enjoyed many books about insects including *Snappy Little Bugs* by Dugald Steer and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. In addition to reading about insects, the Stars designed their own insects using pieces of popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, cotton balls, foam pieces, and googly eyes. To further encourage the children's interest in bugs, Andrea brought in worms, caterpillars, beetles, and butterflies for the children to see and learn about.

