

September 2009

Dear Parents,

WOW what a busy week we had. We learned all about the letter A, what it looks like, what sound it makes, and how to find the letter "A, a" in/on books. We drew on our whiteboards, painted with apples, made apple books, and did an apple experiment. We learned how to "estimate" size and measure for "accuracy" we also learned how to "predict" the outcome of our "experiment" using scientific knowledge.

Teaching children to make letters at the pre-k level is not an age appropriate milestone for them to master. So if your child is not writing at this point don't fret. We are still working on the basic hand strokes they need to master to be able to form letters correctly. It is also important that **when teaching letter writing, teach capital letters first** then lowercase, to avoid confusion and letter reversal. In the case of learning to write their names I will show them the correct upper/ lower case forms.

When introducing letters to your child I introduce capital first, and then lower case. Many of the children did not recognize capital letters, unless it was the first letter of their name. I have shown the children their name in all capital letters and had them trace it. Please know this is not an attempt to teach them to write their name incorrectly, but for them to put meaning to a capital letter. Children learn best when they can relate like items or when what they are learning has meaning to them. With this I do write their names on place cards and nametags, for them to copy onto their work with correct upper/lower case form.

Several times a day the children have to find their name that has been printed on a name tag to know where to sit. I mix up the seating order to insure they are mastering the skill of identifying their name and not just remembering who they sit by.

I use the practice and techniques of Handwriting without Tears.

We made two books this week. Please read these to your children. They made the books, cut them out, pasted them together put them in the correct order, and drew the correct items in the appropriate places. This was a lot of hard work and their little ears had to listen very hard to get it all done. These books have multi-purpose learning skills built in and they are fun! Read, read, and read until they can "read" it to you.

By incorporating what they are hearing into something they must do, using receptive language- (information they hear) and expressive language (what they say or do), simultaneously your child's ability to understand and carry out 3 step directions is greatly increased.

How to read the books:

The first book, “Happy Apple” with the apple faces having emotions

Directions:

1. Have your children make the happy, sad, mad sleepy, etc. face when reading it to them.
2. Then read it again while you make the face and have children tell you if you’re right or wrong. (hint it is fun to make the wrong face and let children teach you)
3. Discuss appropriate actions at school for each emotion.

The second book, “Where is Apple” gives directional terms: under, over, behind, in front of, beside, between.

Directions:

1. Using the apple attached to the back of the book, the “apple antenna”, have children place the apple in the correct position by the tree using the directional words on the page.
2. To Check if your child really understands the directional term.
  - a) Cover the apple in the story with a small square of white paper.
  - b) Have your child place the apple antenna in the correct location of the directional word read to them.

These directional terms are used in writing, reading, math, science, and social skills daily in your child’s academic career. Practice and repeat- children learn through repetition.

# October News

## Miss Cherri's Class

We started a new theme for our Christian character. Last month was friendship, for October it is "Self-Discipline". Our Bible stories will have messages that impact characters that chose right or wrong, knowing how to determine this is the key to developing your own self-discipline. We will then discuss ways they could have chosen differently and the ways God would like us to choose. The stories will include Noah's Ark, Cain and Able, and Zacchaeus in the sycamore tree.

Children learn self-discipline gradually through a process starting with no regulation, to external regulation or adherence, then shared regulation or identification, and finally self regulation or internalization.

Adherence is when children rely on adults to control their actions for them. This may involve physical assistance, verbal cues, or when children's actions are done so to gain reward or avoid negative consequences. Identification is when a child will make choices based on what an adult they admire has done. In this phase children act the way they "think" they should- even if they might not understand why. Example, waiting in line for a drink is done, but the child may not know that waiting your turn represents fairness.

Finally internalization- children can internalize if their choice is right or wrong and act that way because it is the "right" thing to do.

To assist your children in the process of learning self-discipline I wanted to address some discipline techniques I employ in my classroom, how they are chosen and carried out. I believe children learn success through hands on experience- try, try again.

I believe in natural consequences (but always put safety first).

First you should know that your children are taken outside (weather permitting) or in the gym for 20 minutes every morning for movement class at 9:50-10:10 am and then for a nature or "lets go see" walk, or activity such a soccer, yoga, or jumping (jumping jacks, jumping races, pillow sack races) from 10:10 -10:25. EVERY DAY before structured activities start.

**Recess-** is an *extra* free play on the playground the last 20 minutes of the day.

### Center Time

- 1 Children are always given a 5 min and then a 2 min verbal announcement before an activity is stopped. Activities are timed with a timer that beeps.
  - 2 When the timer beeps, I announce, "Clean up time, it's time to clean up for \_\_\_\_." We sing the clean up song, or play the musical version "We're picking it up."  
On certain days children will ask to play the song again, because they are not quit done— which I gladly do.  
Some days they are done way before the song ends.  
Yet on other days they continue to play.
  - 3 On the days they continue to play, I let children know they will run out of time on our schedule and will miss the next activity, whether it is recess, painting, or silly song time.
  - 4 This is where the natural consequence comes in. They miss it or they don't.
- This seems to working very well in our class room. We discuss what we are going to do next time so we will not miss our planned activities.  
Your children love to learn and they are so smart! Give your brain a kiss! Ask your child how; they should be able to show you.

Thank you for sharing your children with me. They are all very special and fill my heart with joy. If you have any questions at all please feel free to call me or email me. I am always glade to answer any questions.

May good blessings and best wishes come to you each day.

Sincerely,  
Ms. Cherri