

Brighter Beginnings Newsletter

April 2019



We hope everyone has had a restful and relaxing Spring Break!

March was a busy month at Brighter Beginnings. We learned about outer space, astronauts and the different planets and stars! We also had our first and very successful Wild Child session. Each class has two additional Wild Child sessions this month: **AM classes - April 8th and April 23rd; PM classes - April 12th and April 26th**. Please remember to dress your child appropriately for the weather on their outdoor days.

Starting next week we will be venturing outside every on the last day of the week (Thursday or Friday). Please check the schedule and send appropriate clothing on those days.

This month we will be continuing our Lenten journey by celebrating Adoration on Friday, and moving on to Easter activities next week.

Contact Information

To let us know of your child's illness/absence or to discuss your child's program, please contact Tracey and Meg:

Office Phone: (780) 467-7137

Email: traceyp@eics.ab.ca

Megan.fortier@eics.ab.ca

Birthdays this Month:

Rananjay (am)

Cara (am)

Charlie (pm)

Senna (pm)

Connor (pm)

Rylee (pm)

Important Dates:

April 9th @ 5:30pm Yoga FOP

April 10th @ 9:00am Supporting the Siblings of Children with Special Needs FOP

April 17th @ 5:30pm P.L.A.Y. FOP



Occupational Therapy Corner

Jen Szydowski: Jennifer.szydowski@eics.ab.ca

Welcome back to school! I hope you had a wonderful Spring Break!

This month's topic is visual perception - how we make sense of what we see. Visual Perceptual skills are the body's ability to take in information from the eyes, organize and interpret it and give it meaning. These information-processing skills include many areas:

Visual Discrimination: The ability to determine differences or similarities in objects or forms based on size, color, and shape. ***The Real life application:*** This skill is important for seeing letters and shapes as different. Difficulties in this skill area can make "p" look a lot like "q" or a square look like a triangle.

Form Constancy: The ability to know that a form or shape is the same, even if it has been rotated, made smaller/larger, or observed from up close or far away. ***The Real life application:*** This skill is important for recognizing that a drawing, a photo, and an object all may represent the same thing. This applies later to words in different fonts and in different locations.

Visual Memory: The ability to recall what something looks like after it has disappeared. ***The Real life application:*** Remembering what their name looks like. Difficulties with this skill make copying from a board or book much more challenging. Later on, these children might take forever to copy an assignment because they can't retain the information to transfer it from the board to their own page.

Visual Sequential Memory is the ability to recall a sequence of objects or forms in the correct order. ***The Real life application:*** This skill is important when following directions for a craft activity or a game. It also applies when we teach kids to recognize their name and recognize the order of the letters.

Visual Closure is the ability to recognize a form or object even when the whole picture of it isn't available. ***The Real life application:*** This means you can see a part of something and fill in the rest in your head. Difficulty with this skill might mean that a child has difficulty understanding how a puzzle piece fits into a whole puzzle.

Visual Spatial Relations: The ability to understand the relationships of objects within the environment. ***The Real life application:*** Visual spatial skills can be important in gross motor terms. Think of the direction, "Go put your shoes under your desk, and then come stand in front of the water fountain." The child must understand how to maneuver within their environment by following those spatial commands. The concept of left / right plays a big part in this skill as well. ***In fine motor terms,*** visual spatial relations are important for appropriate letter orientation and avoiding reversals. After all, "b" and "d" are essentially the same shape, just pointing in different directions.

Visual Figure Ground : The ability to locate something in a cluttered or busy background. ***The Real life application:*** Figure ground skills allow you to find an AAA battery in the junk drawer. A child must be able to sort out visual information to find what they are looking for. Difficulties with this skill can leave kids lost as they look for a specific colour crayon in a box or their own game piece on a game board.

Activities to Strengthen your Visual Perceptual Skills:

1. Sorting shapes, numbers or letters- either on a page or using actual objects
2. Matching Games
3. Puzzles
4. I Spy games- both in books or board games or just with their eyes
5. Where is Waldo type games (hidden pictures)- looking for something in a busy background
6. Finding small objects in a sensory bin.
7. Sorting Games- find something in a drawer, sorting laundry
8. Doing mazes

Great ideas can be found at this website: <http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/visual-perception-activities.html>



Let's Talk About Speech and Language

Kelly Cassan: kelly.cassan@eics.ab.ca

This month we will be doing a number of activities about baby animals, Easter, and mud while we practice speech sounds, language skills, and social skills. Some books we will read and act out include *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Chick*, *Mrs. Wishy Washy*, and *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*. We will play *Walk Like a Chicken*, *Jumpin' Jack*, and decorate Easter eggs to work on speech sounds, following directions, answering questions, social skills, and cooperative play.

Also, Miss Arbuckle will be starting play groups this month. She will be coaching children in play to be flexible, follow the lead of other children, and learn to play in new ways.

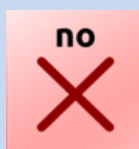
Miss Kelly will be starting year-end assessments for children who are going to kindergarten or moving to a new school or classroom next year!

Early Language and AAC Target Vocabulary This Month:

April 1 - 5



April 8 - 12



April 15 - 19



April 22 - 26



Speech and Language Tip of the Month: Use visual supports. This may include (but is not limited to) pictures, schedules, checklists, within-task schedules, reward charts, timers, first-then visuals, choice boards, social stories, social scripts, core boards, etc.

- Visuals help children increase their comprehension, which allows them to understand and follow directions, complete routines more independently, and decrease frustration.
- Visuals help children who are anxious or children who act out when routines change or during new/unfamiliar activities. Visual supports can help them understand what will happen next and what to expect to reduce anxiety. Visuals also help children focus on important information and cope with change.
- Visuals help children be socially successful. They can help teach social skills, allow students to be more independent, and give students a way to express themselves when they have difficulty using words. When we model the use of visuals, students often start using visuals as well to guide them through their day.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns!

Monthly Snack Prayer

Snack Prayer (sung to Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

Thank you for the world so sweet

Thank you for the food we eat

Thank you for the birds that sing

Thank you, God, for everything.