

## February 2016

How can it be February already? Time is flying by and the children are developing just as rapidly! So much progress has been made with pencil grip, and therefore printing, drawing, and overall fine motor skills are improving. It really is incredible to not only observe, but participate in their development day to day and month to month. By the time June rolls around, they will be all set to head off on the new adventure that grade one will offer.

During the month of February, we will continue to practice our printing of course, but we will also do some other fine motor development activities such as lacing, drawing, painting, and beading. For gross motor skills – as well as math – we do the Count to 100 song, and Count by 10 song daily, as well as Dinosaur Stomp (which is an dance/action song that integrates information relevant to our past theme), and numerous exercises such as jumping jacks, balancing, Simon Says, and the occasional yoga-like poses to provide a calming focus. These activities are not confined to Phys. Ed times. These are all part of our daily routines that nicely combine numeracy and Daily Physical Activity.

This month Madonna focuses on mental health. Even though the students are young, we are discussing this in a basic way. This week we are talking about how we feel because of different things that happen to us (such as sometimes being turned down when asking to play with other children, or not being invited to a birthday party), as well as the ideas that we have in our heads – such as beliefs that we are “no good” at this or that (drawing, skipping, etc), and how these experiences or thoughts can make us feel very sad, left out, disappointed, etc. This ties in well with both Social Studies – I am unique (because we all have different experiences –and reactions), and Religion – as we are talking about how God / Jesus loves us, and will always be there for us, to help us through when we feel sad, lonely, frustrated, etc.

The month of February is the perfect time to talk about love of course, and we are doing just that: discussing how our family loves and cares for us, and how we

show love to others by doing kind things, helping out, making special gifts, like crafts or cards, or giving hugs and saying "I love you." The children will be making a simple Valentine's Day craft next week, in time to bring home on Thursday, February 11, 2016.

Our class will be having a little Valentine's Day Celebration on Thursday, February 11, 2016. This will involve: handing out cards, watching a very short explanation about Saint Valentine as well as a Valentine's special (such as Charlie Brown) on the Smart Board, doing colouring or activity sheets, and sharing some treats. I'd like to have a red food theme for that day, and am hoping to have a few volunteers to help out. These are the foods I would like to have:

- red peppers
- tomatoes
- ‘red’ grapes
- red apples
- strawberries (unless they are expensive!)
- watermelon (?)
- any other red or pink food you would like to bring
- pink lemonade
- ketchup chips
- valentine cookies with red or pink on them

I already have one volunteer coming in for the Valentine's party with the morning class, but would welcome one volunteer for the afternoon. –If more of you are interested, send me an email, and we'll work something out.

A note about volunteering in the class: I am eager to start a classroom volunteer schedule, but I need to know what day(s) work best for each of you. (Paperwork needs to be completed and on file at the office beforehand.) I will post a calendar

outside the classroom and you can sign up. If your child rides the bus to and from school, just send me a short email message and I will sign you up for that date.

Beginning this month, I will be sending home little board games to do with your child. These will be focused on strengthening numeracy and literacy skills. Some of them are very straightforward games of matching, or placing the correct number of items of a given board, to match the number shown, and others may require simple explanation. I ask that you please take extra good care of these games, as they are classroom materials that will be needed next year. I see this as a win-win opportunity, as your child will benefit from the extra practice, and it is great bonding time for both of you (or all, if you make it a family affair). =)

We will be starting our study of space shortly, which as you guessed it... will be “out of this world.” I am planning our trip to the Telus World of Science and will stay in touch with details regarding dates, volunteers required, etc.

As well, I would like to bring the class on several smaller excursions, funds permitting. These include: a trip to Save-On, Safeway, the Clay Hut, the Strathcona County Library, the skating rink, and possibly a toboggan hill (soon -!- and weather permitting).

Please watch for important information or updates on events, etc, in notes coming home in your child’s backpack.

In honour of mental health month, I’ll end with this short motivational message:

Smile – the days are getting longer, and sunlight is good for the soul! =)

Ms Stocker

February is a wild 'n wacky month, so please keep your calendars handy.

Here are the dates to keep in mind:

February 4, 2016 – NO SCHOOL

February 5, 2016 – NO SCHOOL

February 9, 2016 – Shrove Tuesday

February 10, 2016 – Ash Wednesday

February 11, 2016 – Valentine's Day Celebration

February 12, 2016 – PD Day – NO SCHOOL

February 15, 2016 – Family Day – NO SCHOOL