

December News

The Learning Lane
The Woodlands, TX

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THE LEARNING LANE TRIBUNE

Academic Corner



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GREETINGS FROM THE PRE
ACADEMIC ROOM -

A huge thank you to all of our parents for the tremendous support and creativity shown with the weekly Practice Work!

Although we have only 3 weeks of school this month we will continue with a full lesson plan including some fun winter activities that focus on picture identification, rhyming, matching, and strengthening fine motor skills.

We wish you all a safe and happy winter break!!

Social Learning

Social Site



SHORT ATTENTION SPAN

Definition- Short attention span is a behavior in which the child attends to activities for a shorter period of time than other children of the same development level. This may be demonstrated by such behaviors as an inability to sit still, difficulty in focusing on what she or he is doing, distractibility when she or he is engaged in an activity and frequent difficulty in finishing projects.

Reasons and Symptoms

1. About 3 to 5 percent of children, the majority of whom are boys, are diagnosed as having attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

- Deficit in Sustained Attention
- Distractibility
- Impulsivity
- Over activity
- Discipline

2. Nutrition may be a physical reason for the child's short attention span.

- Inadequate Breakfast
- Allergy or Sensitivity to Foods
- Rash/Crankiness /Swollen Eyes

3. Environment

- Excessive Noise
- Poor Room Arrangement
- Poor Traffic Patterns

**Expectations Must BE Realistic
Attention Span is related to child's age and developmental level.**

Social Site Continued:

- Attention span increases with age
- Two-year-olds/ two to three minutes
- Five- year-olds/ concentration 15 to 20 minutes
- Activities / Age - appropriate

To Increase Attention Span

- Make the Environment as conducive to concentration as possible
- Provide a quiet place where children can retreat from noise, activity
- Systematically reinforce the child for attending to activities/longer
- Ignore nonproductive activity

Benefits TO Understanding Short Attention Span

- Use strategies to increase child's concentration level
- Improve overall learning for whole class
- Making the connection between bad behavior and poor concentration
- Lower frustration levels in child/ teacher

Behavior Strategies

- Positive Reinforcement Ignore nonproductive activity

STAR STUDENT OF THE MONTH

Brock

Brock has two favorite things in life, anything related to water and his daddy. It is not unusual at our house to find plastic animals swimming in our dogs' water bowl or in the toilet. If there is water around, Brock is drawn to it. Brock loves swimming (or as Brock calls it "swimmin'") in his grandparent's pool. If he isn't around water, there are sure to be several sea animals by his side.



-“For Ms. Jennifer”

When Brock is not swimming, he loves being with his daddy. They have a very special bond. His daddy reads him books, pushes him on his swing set, and they love making animals with play-doh. Brock's also loves to travel on his daddy's shoulders. Although Brock is a twin, he looks nothing like his brother, Aidan. Instead, Brock is the spitting image of his dad when they were the same age.



Brock is always on the move. We call him "The Flash" because you will see him fly by and then he will be gone. He is very mischievous and curious. He climbs on paper towels and cases of Dr. Pepper to get things out of the pantry. He will scoot chairs across the floor to pull down food from the counter. He climbs on bathroom counters to look at himself in the mirror or play in the sinks. It is so hard not to laugh when we have to discipline him for his climbing because he is so resourceful and smart about getting what he wants. As you can see, there is never a dull moment when Brock is around. He keeps everyone on their toes.

THE ART CART

Congratulations to all our budding artist who received an "Honorable Mention" ribbon at The Woodlands Art League show.

December is already here and we will be doing lots of Christmas crafts to decorate our halls. We only have three weeks before our Christmas break, so we have lots of work to do. Our art classes for December will be as follows.

Monday Dec. 9th Snowflake Ornaments

Thursday Dec. 17th Christmas tree Collages

Art Cart Continued:

As you can see we will be very busy. It's a very busy time of year but I hope that we can all slow down enough to spend some fun family time together being creative. Merry Christmas to all!

KAMP

ACQUISITION

Knowledge Appreciation Memories Possibilities

We hope everyone had a very Happy Thanksgiving! December will be full of many FUN activities, like our snow day, pictures with Santa and our Christmas party!

This month we have introduced our workstations to the children. This will help them become more independent with their work, and teach them to finish a task and move to the next available task. We want to thank all of you for all of your hard work with your parent training homework. Thank you to those who ordered from our scholastic book club, we look forward to many more in the future! We encourage you to choose a favorite book as a teaching tool with your child over the Christmas break.

Have a Merry Christmas and a very safe New Year!



From the Program Director

All of our students have been working hard in their different classrooms! Many of their goals from the program plans we discussed in September have been mastered and new goals are being added. You will start to receive email updates from me regarding any changes made to your child's program. If you ever have any questions, please let me know!

Parent training has been a great success and I hope that you have been working hard on the homework assigned by your child's acquisition teachers. They have been excited to be able to let your children demonstrate all that they have learned. If you receive a parent training feedback form, please fill it out and return it in your child's binder in a sealed envelope with my name on the

Program Director Continued front. Your comments help us to better structure our parent training sessions and are valuable feedback for our teachers.

Steph

CREATE A TRAVEL KIT WITH MONTESSORI IN MIND

Why pack a travel kit?

Gone are the days when children were greeted at the airplane door with a lapel pin and a deck of cards. These days, the wise parent packs a travel kit. In the *Handbook*, Montessori urges adults to generally resist "the monotonous and useless repetition 'keep still.' We should rather give 'order' to his movements..."

Certainly good advice for travel! The alternative to "keep still" is "give those small hands plenty to do."

Will a well-packed travel kit ensure a

happy, absorbed child for hours on end?

Probably not... unless you keep in mind that an adult prepared to spend seat time observing and engaging the child may be the most important part of the young child's travel kit! Along with providing materials for independent exploration, plan for verbal games to share with your child: I Spy, alphabet games, or rhyming games.

It's tempting to offer hand-held electronics and the children may even thank you.

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Resist! Plane and train travel in particular offer an opportunity for intimacy and family relationship-building all too rare in our busy lives. Why throw it away? Engaging travel activities create a context for laughter and learning to share with your child. What a joy it is to watch your child explore an activity specific to their interests and development!

Four-year-old Nate was glad to settle in and buckle up. He looked up at his mother expectantly. Was it time yet? She smiled and pulled an old tin lunchbox out of her big bag. It was!

Nate squirmed with excitement as he opened the lunchbox latches and lifted the lid. He lifted out one of several little boxes and put it on the airplane tray. Inside, there were lots of happy face stickers (his favorite kind!). He carefully peeled off a sticker and stuck it on his sleeve.

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Travel Kit Ideas for Children 3 to 6

For the youngest child, the destination may be no more than an abstract future idea

whereas the child must immediately function in the here-and-now of the journey. Bring along variations of familiar activities that appeal to the child's tendencies toward motor and sensory development, and provide opportunities to acquire language for new things in the environment.

Choose variations of those closures your child has mastered to pack kit contents in. Can he open: a drawstring bag, a hinged box, a zipper bag, a box with a lid that lifts off, an envelope with a string clasp...? Using the zipper closure as an example, include zipper bags of different sizes and materials, and with different kinds of zippers (nylon, metal). If a hinged box is within reach, include cardboard, wooden, tin, and plastic boxes with lids that hinge open, some with simple latches and some without.

Motor Activities: Lacing & Sorting

Lacing and threading are satisfying and relatively compact activities. Shoelaces or yarn (with the ends taped) can serve as laces. Bring lightweight o-shaped cereal or macaroni to string. Bead stringing sets and lacing cards are ideal, too.

Sorting shapes will exercise children's fine motor control and visual discrimination. A lightweight sorting activity for travel might include different kinds of pasta or dried beans, beads with different shapes or colors, or small geometric shapes. Bring a deep tray to contain small items (and expect to lose a few of them!) and a dish with compartments for sorting into.

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Sensory Activities: Mystery Bag

Variations

An opaque bag with pairs of fabric squares that children can identify by touch alone is



a simple variation on the classroom "Mystery Bag" activities. "Where before he had to touch," wrote Montessori, in order to match the pairs, "he must now feel the stuffs...the degree of fineness or coarseness..." Household sewing baskets and fabric outlet stores are good sources for fabrics with different textures. You might include burlap, cotton, wool, satin, velvet, and fake fur, to name a few. Cut the fabric into the same shape and size so only the material is different.

Language Activities: Give Them Words!

Any sorting activity can also be a rich language opportunity. [Give the child the spoken "labels" (the words that name the characteristics) as he sorts. For color sorting: "Those are red. These are blue." For shape sorting, circle, triangle, etc.

Picture cards (with word labels) that can be sorted and matched are lightweight and portable. If you have time, make up cards that name things in the travel environment. Simply cut out images from magazines or travel brochures, glue them to cards, and write the words legibly underneath the images. Subjects for an airplane trip might include airport, counter, airplane, suitcase, pilot, flight attendant, window, sky, clouds, city (from above!)... For train travel, make cards for station, conductor, tracks, platform, ticket, etc.

To satisfy the thirst for language, bring books to read aloud and vocabulary cards; children will be fascinated with stories about children traveling and books or cards with photos of vehicles that will help them make sense of the travel environment. A drawing book already set up with space on top for drawing and space below for writing is a great mutual travel activity (you can write the words that match your child's pictures).

DATES TO REMEMBER:

December 3- North Houston ASA Meeting: Dr. Richard E. Frye, M.D- Biomedical Intervention in Autism 7:00-9:00 pm
www.houstonautismnetwork.com

December 11- Santa Pictures

December 18- Snow Day/ Christmas Party -1:30 pm

December 21- January 4- Christmas Holiday-The Learning Lane CLOSED