

Friday, April 30, 2010

Dear Parents:

We have finished the first week of our thematic unit on plants. We have learned that plants are living things and that they need water, sun, soil and air to live and grow. The students have learned that many plants grow from seeds. They also have learned the four parts of plants: roots, stems, leaves and flowers or seeds. They have planted seeds and are observing them daily.

The Teacher Read Aloud Book was Spring Is Here. The Social Science link book was What Season Is It? The Kinder Friends book was Growing Flowers. The Phonics Library story was Get Set! Play! The Barbara Saul book was Tommy Bear for a special reason. This week we celebrated Bear Day. The students practiced their oral language skills by talking to the class about the stuffed animal they brought to school. They practiced their writing and art skills by writing and illustrating a story about their stuffed animal. We practiced math skills by measuring the teddy bears.

From the Parent Guide to SeeSaw, Get Creative With Literacy Artistic activities do more than stretch your child's imagination — they give her a chance to flex skills she will need as a strong reader. Try these creative literacy boosts together:

Introduce visual arts. We often think that reading is only about printed words, but a key to understanding text is being able to visualize it. Have your child draw, paint, or mold from clay scenes from a story you've read with her. Specifically, ask her to create a scene not illustrated in the book. This will help her develop visualization skills. Does she depict the character/setting as the author describes? Can she explain the scene she's depicted as well as what happens before and after? Encourage her to imagine details (wardrobe, weather, etc.) that the author doesn't describe.

Get dramatic. Give your budding thespian simple costumes and props, and let him act out a fairy tale or nursery rhyme. He may only be able to remember a few lines by heart, so instead of using a script, invite him to make up lines as he goes along. This helps him learn the conventions of conversation and expands vocabulary. Acting out a story also teaches story sequence, which is an important foundation for reading comprehension.

Put it to music. Like poetry, songs let your child test the boundaries of language and self-expression. Build her sense of rhythm and boost vocabulary by putting new lyrics to a familiar song, such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Read books about music or musicians, such as Charlie Parker Played Be Bop, and let her use homemade instruments to imitate the music described in the story.