

ISD #347
WPS—Jefferson Learning Center
611 5th St. SW
Willmar, MN 56201

Jodi Wambeke
320-231-8490
wambekej@willmar.k12.mn.us

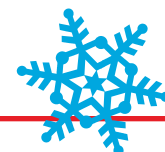


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Willmar Early Childhood Initiative Vision

The Willmar Early Childhood Initiative is committed to increase school readiness and improve the literacy skills of children in Willmar through partnerships that encourage a community environment that supports the growth and development of young children.



See Inside!

- Page 2: Dressing Children in Winter
Stuck Inside? Family Meals Recipe
- Page 3: Curl Up with a Good Book
Craft Corner
- Page 4: W.O.W. World of Wonder
Language-Literacy Skills



Willmar Early Childhood Initiative
Winter 2012

Math and the world around us

Mathematics helps children make sense of the world around them and find meaning in the physical world. Through mathematics, children learn to understand their world in terms of numbers and shapes. They learn to reason, connect ideas, and think logically. Mathematics is more than learning your 1, 2, 3's and adding or subtracting. It is about connections and seeing relationships in everything we do.

Children learn best when they are engaged and excited about what they are doing. As a parent, you have an opportunity to make the most of the teachable moments during the day when your children are curious. Toddlers may just point to objects saying "dat?" to ask what it is. Describe it for them, "Oh, that's a green plant" or "the table is round." As your children get older, they may ask "how many?" or "what color...?" These questions encourage children to think. Take advantage of learning opportunities that

happen naturally. When you use daily events that have meaning to your children, the impact is very powerful.

Things you can do at home to encourage mathematics...

Children learn best when they are engaged and excited about what they are doing.

When getting dressed, ask them to match the colors of their clothes. "Let's wear blue today. Can you find your shirt with the blue ball?" As they get older, ask them to look for patterns in their clothing. There can be patterns with alternating colors, stripes, shapes, or pictures—like a big truck followed by little trucks. Ask children to find and describe patterns, "My shirt has a pattern. It is green, blue, and green, blue." Patterns help us to solve problems because they help us predict what comes next.

Discuss the events of the day with your children: first we'll eat breakfast, and then you will go to child care or school, after school we will go to the park. With your older child, talk about events that will happen in the morning, afternoon, evening, or night. "In the morning we get up. In the evening we go to bed." This will help your children understand that sequence of events is another pattern. Knowing what comes next helps us find structure in our world and helps children feel secure and confident.

Here are a couple of activities that parents can use to help their children develop early language and literacy skills.

Playing with sounds

- Take turns making sounds or saying words with your infant or toddler.
- Make the same sound your infant or toddler is making (ba-ba).
- Make a sound that is like your infant or toddler's sound (ga-ga).
- Make sounds of familiar animals (dog, cat).
- Make sounds of familiar objects (car, water, wind).

To help your infant or toddler succeed, you can:

- Do this activity while doing something your child enjoys (bathing, being tickled, eating or playing with toys).
- Wait and see if your child makes a sound, then imitate that sound.
- Play with toy animals or look at picture books about animals and make animal sounds.
- Make sounds while playing bouncing and turn-taking games.



W.O.W. World of Wonder

'WOW' is a yearlong series of events that celebrates children's growth and development. Each month there will be a parent-child event hosted by an Early Childhood Initiative partner. Each month the focus will be on a specific developmental or interest area. These events are open to ALL families in our community with children birth to age 5. This is a great opportunity to meet other families with children the same age, see community programs and visit with members of the Willmar ECI.

Month	Host	Topic	Location	Date	Time
February	Child Care Resource and Referral	Block Play	Jefferson Learning Center	Thursday, February 16	6:00-7:30
March	Loving Arms Child Care Center	Science and Sensory	Loving Arms Child Care Center	Tuesday, March 20	6:00-7:30
April	Heartland Head Start	Math	Jefferson Learning Center	Thursday, April 19	6:00-7:30



Dressing Children in the Winter

Winter brings many outdoor activities for your children. Outdoor experiences are important for young children (and fun!). Therefore, dressing appropriately and paying attention to the weather are crucial. We think children will let us know if they are cold, BUT THEY DON'T, so it is the responsibility of the parent or provider to make sure they are dressed appropriately for winter.

Dress in Layers

When you dress your child in layers, you allow buffer zones of warm air to get trapped between garments, providing superior insulation. 3 layers is ideal.

1. Start with a moisture-wicking under layer. Begin with long johns. For children, a two piece top-and-bottom set is easier to get on and off. Choose a quick-drying, moisture wicking fabric. Avoid cotton because it absorbs perspiration and sticks to the skin.

2. Add an insulating middle layer. The middle layer should be a lightweight stretchy insulator such as a breathable fleece sweater or vest. Buy the fleece as a two-piece and make sure both pieces are loose fitting.

3. Top with a protective outer layer. The outer layer, or shell, keeps warm air in and wind and water out. The shell should create a moisture barrier while allowing moisture to escape from inside. Look for these terms on the label: wind resistant, water-repellent, and breathable.

4. Be sure to cover all body parts

Protect feet, hands, heads and neck. . Keep hats on children because most body heat escapes from the head. Hands and feet are most susceptible to frostbite. Instead of scarf try a neck gator to keep the cold out.

With proper clothing you and your children will be ready to enjoy outdoor winter activities.

Stuck indoors? No problem.....

Winter months tend to drag out with the shorter days, usually lots of snow and the cold. If you find yourself going a little stir crazy here are a few ideas to increase the fun-o-meter at your house....

Let's go skating!

You don't have to go outside to skate..Find non-carpet floors, put on some socks, turn on the music and skate. What a great way to burn off some energy as well as work on developing those large muscles!

Build a Snowman, Inside

Grab some cotton balls and some construction paper and glue and let your child make a snowman on paper. Older children can add beads for the nose, eyes, mouth, and buttons.



Go on a picnic, yes a picnic.

Pack a picnic basket or bag which ever you have with great snacks or even a meal, blanket and books. Have your child pick out a special place in your home to spread out the blanket, enjoy the food and finish by reading your child's favorite stories.

Who needs Dance Party 3.....

You do not need to have video games to dance. Turn on your radio, CD, iPod or whatever you have and dance! Or if you prefer, your family could have a dance off. What a great way to enjoy family time together having fun!



Family Meals

Family meals help to build strong family bonds. You may think you don't have time for family meals, but it's worth the effort. Children who see their parents eating healthy foods also eat healthy foods themselves. Toddlers who eat at least one meal a day with their family do better in school. Try to have at least one adult sit and eat at the same time as your child every day. Find one time during the week when everyone can sit together.

It may be a breakfast or a lunch time. Keep it simple, keep it fun... just keep it! Make family meals a priority in your house.

- ◆ Plan ahead — look at family schedules. Find a time that works for everyone.
- ◆ Let everyone know that the family will sit and eat together.
- ◆ Avoid talking about problems.
- ◆ Keep meals simple. Buy foods that are easy to prepare.
- ◆ Have pleasant family conversations. Talk about fun things.
- ◆ Ask your child about her day. Talk about future plans you have together.

RECIPE

Painted Toast

Ingredients:

- milk
- food coloring (2-4 colors)
- bread

butter – optional

Directions:

1. Fill 2-4 glasses with a 1/8 cup of milk
2. Then take your 2-4 food colorings and in each glass put 5 drops of food coloring in the milk and stir till color shows.
3. Use a small paint brush and dip the brush into the food coloring. Then take your piece of bread and paint a face or picture of choice on it.
4. Now place your bread into a toaster and wait till the bread is toasted.
5. Butter lightly to give taste - ENJOY!



Curl Up With a Good Book!

This winter has been very mild so far but I'm sure that will change any day now. When the cold, snowy winter weather does come, set aside time for just reading. Curl up on the couch/recliner together and read aloud an old favorite or checkout books with a winter theme. Preschoolers enjoy a good book whether at bedtime or just as one-on-one time with mommy/daddy or a caregiver. Read to your child or, better yet, let your preschooler read to you. Preschoolers enjoy picture reading, they tell the story by describing what they see in the pictures. They would even enjoy "writing" on frosted windows or in the snow as another fun activity. Reading is sure to keep you warm this winter, so do keep an array of books on hand. There are some wonderful winter books at your public library and we are listing some of the classics and some newer books for you and your child's enjoyment.

1. The Jacket I Wear in the Snow by Shirley Neitzel
2. The Mitten by Jan Brett
3. The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats
4. Brownie Groundhog and the February Fox by Susan Blackaby
5. Forever Friends by Carin Berger
6. Carl's Snowy Afternoon by Alexandra Day
7. Here Comes Jack Frost by Kazuno Kohara
8. Mama, Will it Snow Tonight by Nancy White Carlstrom
9. Mr. Groundhog Wants the Day Off by Pat Stemper Vojta
10. Gus Makes a Friend by Frank Remkiewicz
11. Snowball by Lois Ehlert
12. Snowmen All Year by Caralyn Buehner
13. Snow Puppy by Marcus Pfister
14. Snow Rabbit, Sprint Rabbit by Il Sung Na

Craft Corner

Paper Mitten Garland

These newspaper mittens are one of the most beautiful winter crafts that I have ever found. What a wonderful way to teach our children about the beauty of recycling.



Photo Credit: [Paper Mitten Garland](#)
by Cortney from Two Straight Lines

1. Make a template and help your child trace around the mitten. Tracing helps children strengthen their fine motor skills in preparation for learning to write.
2. Use a hole punch to make the lacy pattern around the edge. This activity could be done by an older child if it is too difficult for your preschooler.
3. Cut a heart shape out of a potato cut in half and use it to stamp the red hearts.
4. Hang the mittens in the window to show off the outdoor winter scene.

They could practice counting the mittens also.

Bookmarks

Here's an easy to make gift idea, or something to keep for your own use.

Materials List

Cardstock
Glue
Pictures of Children

Instructions

1. Cut cardstock to the size of bookmark your child wants to make.
2. Have the kids cut out pictures of themselves to fit on the bookmark.
3. Glue the children's pictures to the top of the bookmark
4. Below the picture have your children write -

We'll hold your place _____ (whoever it is for)
or
Here is where I left off...

Hints:

- You may laminate this so it will last forever.
- Change the text for the any person the child needs to make a gift for.
- For very young children, you can write the words, or print them from a computer. But written by a child looks best.