From the Desk of the Director
by Dr. Mandy Medvin  (email: medvinm@westminster.edu)

This month’s focus is on early literacy. Fostering the learning of reading and writing concepts in young children in an age-appropriate fashion is a core objective of early childhood programs. Children who enjoy listening to stories and commenting, playing rhyming games, scribbling messages and lists, taking ‘restaurant orders’ in pretend play, talking about their day in conversations, and engaging in many other literacy related activities are more likely to become excellent readers and writers in the future.

Many of the activities we use are described here in this issue. Literacy activities can also extend knowledge in many areas. For example, see this NAEYC article on literacy and math https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/math-and-literacy-perfect-pair. So enjoy reading with your children!

M/W/F Class Head Teacher’s Notes
by Debi Roud  (email: roudds@westminster.edu)

Our concentration this month will be on emergent literacy with young children. Early childhood is a time when children are naturally excited about words and are eager to take part in literacy learning. A literate classroom offers abundant opportunities for children to make use of print and practice skills throughout the environment. During the month of February we will be highlighting literacy by having a pretend post office in dramatic play, using invented writing to create letters and reading lots of books!

Your four-and-five-year-olds are showing many pre-reading skills already. We have observed many children writing their friends’ names, scribbling a list or a story, “reading” books out loud or chanting rhymes to a song. Here are some other ways that our preschool continues to promote your child’s proficiency to become an enthusiastic reader and writer:

- Putting labels, captions and other print in places where they serve a purpose;
- Creating inviting places for children to read with their friends or on their own;
- Including a wide variety of books and print materials that affirm children’s backgrounds;
- Placing books where children can reach them easily;

(See M/W/F continued on page 2)

T/Th Class Teacher’s Notes
by Missy Moore  (email: mooreml@westminster.edu)

February seems to be a great month for literacy in the classroom. We set up a post office in the dramatic play area where pre-reading and pre-writing skills flourish. As post office play develops, we see the children pretending to read mail, write notes, make lists and deliver packages.

Literacy! Have you ever entered our classroom and wondered why our table is labeled with a sign that says table or our toys have pictures and words to label them? Young children begin to realize words have meaning and power by associating the name of an object with that object. When children learn that saying “water” gets them a drink or “out” lets them

(See T/Th continued on page 3)
Linking books and reading experiences with engaging activities that stretch children's learning;

Showing children that we read print moving from left to right and top to bottom;

Including new words in conversations and creating opportunities for children to engage in interactive activities;

Offering games and songs that emphasize pattern;

Writing children's words on experience stories, charts or letters;

Inspiring letter reading and writing in a pretend post office and grocery store.

These are just a few examples of literacy in the classroom. Research shows that an environment filled with print, language and literacy play, storybook reading, and writing allow children to experience the joy associated with reading and writing. That enjoyment spans a lifetime!

Here are some ways you can promote literacy in your home:

- Pointing out letters and words and encouraging your child to find them in books and all around in games, packages, jars, ads, logos and hundreds of other places;
- Talking about everyday print. (“The sign says McDonald’s”);
- Providing magnetic or plastic letter tiles for children's play;
- Challenging your child to be a print detective. (“Can you tell me what cereal I've written on the list?”); and
- Enjoying reading with your child. Read at a leisurely pace with pauses here and there. This gives children time to take in what they hear, mull it over, and imagine the people, places, and events.

In keeping with the literacy theme, the M/W/F class is beginning a “My Favorite Book” rotation. During the next few months each student will be asked to bring in a favorite book along with a special page that parent and child may do together. The pages will be posted outside our preschool and the child will have the spotlight at a circle time to either “read” or tell us about their book.

**Recipe:**

**Preschool Play-doh**

- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 1/2 cup salt
- 1 tablespoon alum
- 2 cups boiling water
- 3 tablespoons corn oil
- Food coloring

Mix all dry ingredients together. Add water and mix. Add oil and mix again. Knead in food coloring.

**February Websites:**

www.cbcbooks.org

http://children.webmd.com/guide/nightmares

http://pbskids.org
outside, they realize spoken words have meaning and can get them what they need or want.

The next step is to begin to associate letters and words with objects. This is the start of emergent literacy and, yes, your three- and four-year-olds are doing this! Below are just a few examples of ways three- and four-year-olds are practicing emergent literacy in our classroom:

- "Reading", memorizing, or just asking about the labels hung around our classroom;
- During clean up time, putting the toys back in the appropriate bins that are labeled with written print and pictures;
- Recognizing and reading their names and their classmates' names on our helper tree or on their cups at snack time. Children are helped to identify letters in names;
- Listening to books, stories, and poems that the teachers or parent readers read to them during center time. Children see the text and point to the words as they are read to them;
- Encouraging a child to "read" the story back to the teacher or parent reader;
- At the easels, asking the children to tell you about their painted picture. As you write down their words, children watch letter formation and left to right progression;
- Children are encouraged to play with the sounds of language by singing songs and fingerplays, repeating silly sounds, and clapping out syllables;
- Children are learning how to hold a marker and write letters—even if it is in ‘scribble’ form.

### Songs We Sing

#### Sticky Bubble Gum Song

Sticky, sticky, sticky bubble gum
Bubble gum, bubble bum
Sticky, sticky, sticky bubble gum
Sticking to my . . . . .
(Child chooses a body part on which to “stick” the gum)
OOHHH that's sticky!
1, 2, 3
(unstick the gum and twinkle your fingers to the floor)

#### There's a Big Red Heart

(Tune—It's a small world)

There’s a big red heart down inside of me.
There’s a big red heart no one else can see
It is filled to the brim with love from within.
And now I give it all to you!

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**Valentine’s Party: February 13 & 14**

Please bring a Valentine for everyone in the class. There are 18 children in the M/W/F class and 14 in the T/Th class. Your children may use “pretend” writing, the first letter of their name, or their entire name to sign each valentine, then seal it in a blank envelope. The valentines will be “delivered” during early morning free play. Our parent committee will be providing games, crafts and a special snack for these special days.
HIGHLIGHTS-M/W/F CLASS:

Art
We will be exploring art from two artists: Wassily Kandinsky and Michelangelo di Lodovico. Paper towel art, Kandinsky felt circle art and our very own Sistine Chapel art are just some of the creative things we hope to accomplish!

Books!
We will be discussing various kinds of books, reading books to one another, and making alphabet art. A walking field trip to McGill Library on Monday, February 12th is planned where we will enjoy a story, craft, and explore all the books the library has to offer.

Valentine’s Day/Pink Day
Wednesday, February 14, our parent volunteers are planning a wonderful Valentine’s Day Party. Children’s valentines will be “delivered” during early morning free play. Our parent committee will be providing the games, crafts, and special snack for the day. It is also pink day. Please have your child wear something pink that day.

Staying Healthy
Staying healthy is the focus of this unit theme. Over a two-week period, we will be talking about germs, the food pyramid, and how we keep our bodies healthy with the help of doctors and dentists. Grocery store play will get underway to help children think about healthy food choices. We gladly accept any clean empty food containers for our grocery store!

HIGHLIGHTS-T/TH CLASS:

Love
February is the perfect month to talk about all the things we love! We will be discussing feelings, friendship, family, and being kind in general.

Post Office
Lots of time will be spent in the dramatic play area practicing literacy skills by pretending to write letters, stamp envelopes and, in general, be postal carriers! We would appreciate any junk mail you would be willing to donate to our post office.

Pink Day
Thursday, February 8th will be PINK Day! Please have your child wear something pink to school. We will continue to talk about friendship, love, and all things Valentines!

Valentines’ Day Party
Our Valentine’s Day party will be on Tuesday, February 13th. Our parent committee has planned a fun party with crafts, games, stories, and a special Valentine’s snack. I will be sending an email to all families regarding our procedures for “valentine cards.”

Books
To end our month we will be talking about books. We all love to read and even your 3-4 year olds are “reading” in their own ways! The T/TH class will be walking to McGill Library on campus on Thursday, February 22. Please send your child’s favorite book to school for a special “Show and Tell,” and make sure to dress your child appropriately to walk across campus on this day. The library staff welcomes the preschool with stories, activities, and a chance to look through all the wonderful books they have to share!
PICTURE PAGES

Ice block play!

Luke and Evan sled riding partners!

Sled riding day 2018!
Sled Riding Day 2018! Mr. Moore, Peyton, Roman, and Cate had a blast!

Etta, Jason, Zachary, Mia, Hanna and Cate played with a block of ice.

Maddie, Etta and Syndey all dressed up!