

## Building Blocks Newsletter

### February 2006

All our classes have settled very well since the Christmas break. We hope you all enjoyed the concerts. We were thrilled with the performances of each class, from the solos of the SK children; the group recitation of the JK's in their class play; the Preschool bell songs; and finally the Toddler snow songs. Did you enjoy the cranberry sauce? The children spoke about having it at their family celebrations upon their return to school in January.

The children and teachers alike enjoyed fitness week after the two week break. We have found after many years the fitness theme is a fun way for children to be reintroduced to the routines of being in school again. This past week and a half we explored different countries, starting with our own country Canada. The children were all so enthusiastic and interested in this theme. There was much discussion, music, dancing and interesting things to see and touch. Thank you to Mrs. Kiely who brought things from Australia to share with us.

We have made a few changes this year in terms of space being used at Building Blocks. The space we use is shared space with not only the church but various other groups who rent from the church. The yellow playroom is a bright big space the children enjoy for many of their activities.

The preschool program uses this area for 1 ½ hours of their day while the kindergarten children use this area for 1 hour of their day. While we feel our programs are balanced, our preschool program is more play oriented, with our kindergarten more phonics/academic based. We believe both programs are superior to any thing currently offered any where else and are also very age appropriate. All our staff is experienced and nurturing.

We are now using the foyer as the area where the kindergarten children do their worksheets relating to their phonics and math programs. \* (JK's and SK's are still taught their lessons separately in the smaller classrooms.) This larger space allows us more room for serving snack and during large circle times when more space is required. Using this space allows Mrs. Freer and Mrs. Sanger more opportunity to interact with all children for snack time and free play. The activities in this area are quieter, and involve more small motor skills. This area is occupied from around 9:30/1:30 until 11:15/3:15. For health reasons we ask that your children not use the equipment before or after school starts.

The back entrance that many of you use at going home time is now unlocked for entrance into the school. The handle can be tight so just give it a turn to the left and it will open. Thank you to all the parents for parking in the parking lot and not in the driveway. Arrival and dismissal is a busy time with everyone coming and going at the same time. We appreciate your patience. Please remember if you ever have

concerns we are happy to speak to you. Dismissal time is the best time for us as we are the most free then.

We are expanding our Tuesday/ Thursday afternoon preschool class and have a few openings. If you know of anyone interested please pass on our number 905-846-3305 to them.

Our annual trip to Bob's Sugar Shack will be cancelled this year as Bob has moved away! If any parent knows of any one else who has a sugar shack that would like to have Building Blocks come for a visit let us know.

### Toddler News: ( 5-1 ratio)

Mrs. Geddes continues to enjoy working with her group. Her class is always full of various and fun activities. The sand has just been changed to rice for a different texture. She says the children are following the routines of the classroom, and are sharing and co-operating very well. Their circle time is now 15 minutes long and includes calendar time, a story, songs and games related to the theme. The toddlers love action songs and finger rhymes. Most of her parents have commented on how well their child's speech is developing since being in the program. Mrs. Geddes is also working with some of her parents who are toilet training their children. The toddlers are in the process of visiting the preschool children and exploring the big yellow play room. This makes the transition to preschool much easier.

Mrs. Geddes is very happy how patiently the children now wait for their names to be called at the end of circle to go home.

### Preschool News: (8-1 ratio)

The preschool children start their class time in the large yellow room with Mrs. Vamus and Mrs. Quibell (and Mrs. VanderBurgt on T/T afternoons). The children arrive and sit for opening circle and are now very much more focused than in September. They all enjoy coming to school and enjoy and benefit from the routines and structure of the classroom. There has been improvement in all the children and many have moved from playing side by side (parallel play) to playing with friends (cooperative play). The preschool children are really enjoying the various arts and crafts being offered. All these activities are well thought out and preplanned with active learning always incorporated. The preschool children move easily into the hallway now when they switch teachers. Mrs. Freer and Mrs. Sanger work with all the preschool children but do split the children up for small circle times. Small circles consist of calendar time, stories, games, songs and finger plays related to the theme. Small circle time is around 20 minutes in length. The children finish their day with a larger circle that consists of games. The children are now much better at waiting, participating and cooperating. These children love games where they get to choose partners.

### JK News: (10-1 ratio)

The JK class starts their day with Mrs. Freer. A reminder to please come as close to 9:00/1:00 as possible, so as not to miss the teaching circle, it is an important part of

the children's day. We start our day doing a few movement activities to help the children to focus on the lesson. We always do the daily calendar. We have now learned over 30 sounds and many of the children are blending and reading 3 and 4 letter words. The children are being taught to listen to the beginning, middle and ending sounds that are in words. Towards the end of March the children will start spelling 2 words per day combining the sounds they will have learned. We started this last year and the results were amazing. Some of our SK children are now reading and spelling at Grade 2 levels! The children also have a word ring with tricky (sight) words. They all know **the, you** and **are**. I am going to slow down on any new tricky words until most of the children understand the words we have so far on the ring. The parents in this program are to be congratulated for working at home with their children. It really shows as most sounds are shouted out when reviewing sounds. The children's faces really light up when they are sounding out words and they realize they have read a word.

Currently we are playing beginning sounds games, which the children love and will move onto ending sounds and rhyming sound games. For the month of January the JK class kept a weather chart in class recording the temperature and the weather. The children finished their graph in class and took their charts home. The weather was amazing this month! The children loved recording the information and looking at the thermometer on a daily basis.

The children attending 3 and 5 days a week have a planned math program. They are currently working on ordinal numbers in sequence. Some of the children really love their " Math Days."

The children are moving into the hallway to do their worksheets at around 9:45/1:45. Their printing has improved greatly since September with many of the children working much more independently. The children are working carefully and taking much more pride in their work.

The word bags are there for the benefit of your children. We are on Book 6 of sounds, so feel free to use the sound bags that reflect those sounds. At this point the double vowel sounds are still confusing for the many of the children. I draw a line under the two letters and remind them that sometimes it might only make one sound. ( oa says o as in boat). It's great to see how many JK parents use our lending library. The home made word ring books are great at this point for helping your child to read. Please help us by keeping the books organized when you return them.

The JK's enjoy snack time at 10:00/2:00 and are free to sit with their SK friends at this time. They enjoy theme related songs with both Mrs. Sanger and Mrs. Freer and a story until 10:30/2:30 when they then switch into the playroom. They enjoy the rest of the program where the art activity is again more geared to complimenting the phonics base of the program. The children tell us they like both parts of their day at Building Blocks. The children finish off their day with action songs with Mrs. Vamus and Mrs. Quibell.

## SK News: (10-1 ratio)

The SK children have made huge gains over the last few months. They have covered so many topics: the use of nouns, verbs and adjectives, how to conjugate verbs, how to use past and present tenses when writing a sentence, how to use a dictionary and how to arrange words and groups of letters into alphabetical order and initial letter blends (sp as in spell, sw as in swim). The weekly Monday spelling tests are progressing nicely; many children are finding it easier to sound out words and are remembering words from past spelling tests when journaling. All the work you parents are putting in is really paying off. On "Math Fridays" the class has covered units on counting and identifying numbers up to 100, learning to tell the time, and we are just starting a unit on addition. All these spelling, grammar and math concepts are taught on an on going basis, and reviewed regularly. The lesson each day lasts about 25 minutes in Mrs. Sanger's room then the group moves into the hallway to do their written work. The reading level of the children in the SK class has improved tremendously, with many parents commenting on how their children just love to read. We at Building Blocks are pleased that you have let us develop and nurture this thirst for knowledge in your children.

A reminder to that we will have a sign up sheet for Valentine treats for each class. Please remember we are a nut free school.

We have not yet set the date for registration for next year. We will send out a separate letter when we have firm dates.

Activity sheets are posted weekly in the hall way. These sheets keep you informed on all the various activities your child will do while attending Building Blocks.

Building Blocks Nursery School

"We keep the child in childhood"