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Moore News

News from the Shirley G. Moore Lab School at the University of Minnesota

PALS Update

The next PALS (Parent Association of the Lab School) meeting is coming up on Thursday, February 11th at 6 p.m. and we would love for all of you to attend. We will be discussing the spring semester of the school year. PALS is a great way to get involved with your child's school and get to know some of the other parents. Please contact Katie, Samira, or Sheila for more information or any questions you have prior to the meeting. Thank you!

A short introduction to our 2015-2016 PALS Co-Chairs Hello. My name is Katie Gross. I have two girls attending the lab school this year. Brooklyn is in her second year and in Ross's morning class. Ariana is in Ayuko's 2-day class. This year I am involved in the school by being a co-room parent for both classrooms and also as the PALS co-chair.

I'm Samira, Aurang Shirazi's mom (Ayuko 2-day class), and I'm very excited to be working on the PALS committee. Aurang's dad and I moved from NY to the Twin Cities a few years ago and Aurang is our only child. I'm a lawyer and work in the Twin Cities. When I'm not working, I try to help out at the Lab School and spend time with my family. I look forward to getting to know you.



Winter Recipes

By Amy Vavricka

Throughout this issue of the Moore News there are a variety of recipes that are healthy, easy to prepare, and can get you in the winter spirit!

2-Ingredient Grapefruit Slush

- * 2 large grapefruit, peeled and sectioned
- * 1 frozen banana
- * Ice

In a blender combine grapefruit, banana and ice. Blend until smooth. Serve immediately.

Other ideas for **very cold days...**

- * Pour maple syrup over clean snow to make maple candy

Lab School Wish List

- * Sleds with rope/strings
- * Child-sized snow shovels
- * Waterproof mittens and gloves. Sizes 3-6
- * Children's cross-country skis
- * Organic potting soil
- * Felt stories

Welcome to the Lab School Winter Newsletter!

Check inside for updates, reminders, and ideas for frosty fun!

Parent Education - Executive Functions

Executive function skills are a growing topic of interest in the field of early childhood education. Executive functions are the processes we use to plan, initiate and complete an activity while controlling emotions, maintaining attention and responding to feedback from others. Research has shown that the development of executive function, or ‘EF’ skills is correlated to success later in life. Children who exhibit strong EF skills are better able to plan, make choices, focus their attention, and think flexibly.

EF skills are often broken down into three central brain functions: working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility. Working memory is your ability to retain information and use that information in a functional and accessible manner. Children use their working memory when they remember multi-step instructions (*first put your jacket away, then wash your hands, then choose where you want to play in the classroom*). Inhibitory control is the ability to resist an automatic response and make intentional choices that guide behavior (*I really want to go down the slide, but it’s not my turn yet. I’ll get in line and wait for a turn*). Cognitive flexibility is the ability to switch between different rules or ways of thinking and is closely tied to problem solving (*it’s safe for me to run outside on the playground, but it’s not safe for me to run in the classroom... there are places I **can** run, and there are places I **can’t** run*).

Give every activity an “EF” boost by focusing on the following concepts:

1. **Problem solving:** Any opportunity for children to problem solve is an EF boost! Simple open-ended questions like “What do you think?” “What do you guess might come next?” and “What can we do to fix it?” encourage children to practice their EF skills. Also model your own thinking. Explain how you arrived at an answer or solved a problem.
2. **Support cognitive flexibility:** Switch the rules to games when you can, or have children do the “opposite” once they have a firm grasp of the traditional rules. Ask open-ended questions and encourage children to come up with more than one answer to a problem or question.
3. **Support working memory:** Make exaggerated mistakes and let children correct you! It’s a fun and engaging way to have the children remember and verbalize rules for games or classroom behaviors. Asking children about experiences they have had or things they have done recently is another way to engage their working memory skills.
4. **Support inhibitory control:** Any activity that requires children to take turns is an exercise in inhibitory control! Set clear expectations, reassure children that they will have multiple turns, and reward patience and turn taking with positive attention.

Prepared by Marie Lister



Health and Safety in the Winter Months

Welcome back and Happy New Year! As Winter arrives, flu and common cold viruses are also beginning to proliferate. One of the best and easiest ways to prevent your child from getting sick is to wash his/her hands with soap and water often and as soon as he/she gets home from school or any public places. The recommended time frame for hand washing is 20-30 seconds or singing ABCs twice. To avoid spreading germs, you should encourage your child to cough or sneeze into the elbows or shoulders. It is often difficult to gauge whether to send your child to school if he or she coughing, sneezing, or sounding ill. Below is an excerpt of the Lab School health policy from the Family Handbook:

Exclusion of Sick Children (p. 43)

A child with any of the following conditions or behaviors must be excluded from the Lab School. If a child becomes sick while at school, the child will be isolated from other children and the parent will be called immediately. If the child rides a bus, a staff member will stay with the child until a parent or authorized adult takes over. A sick child will be supervised at all times. The license holder must exclude, according to the Department of Human services, a child who has:

1. A contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep throat, mumps, etc. (as listed in the "Notification" section).
2. A temperature over 100° (orally).
3. An upset stomach, vomiting, or an intestinal disturbance with diarrhea.
4. An undiagnosed rash.
5. Sore or discharging eyes or ears, or profuse

nasal discharge.

6. Unexplained lethargy.
7. Lice, ringworm or scabies that is untreated and contagious.
8. Bacterial infection until 24 hours of anti-microbial therapy is completed.
9. Significant respiratory distress.
10. A child who requires more care than program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in the program.
11. An unvaccinated child susceptible to a vaccine preventable disease present in the school.

Children should be kept out of school for at least 24 hours after a fever, stomach upset, or commencement of antibiotic treatment. A child should remain home until she is able to participate in a normal school day, including outdoor play. If there are any questions, parents, should check with the Director prior to a child's return ([612-624-9543](tel:612-624-9543)).

Below are more resources about winter health and safety from the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/news-features-and-safety-tips/Pages/Winter-Safety-Tips.aspx>

<http://www.cdc.gov/family/holiday/>

Prepared by Ayuko Boomer

Science and Cooking

The winter provides many outdoor opportunities to witness and explore physical properties and changing states of matter. Ice, snow, sleet, and water all spark curiosity in children. The kitchen can be a great place to plan experiences that build knowledge of these concepts in new and tasty ways. I hope you enjoy preparing and eating these healthy treats with your children.

Blueberry Chia Popsicles

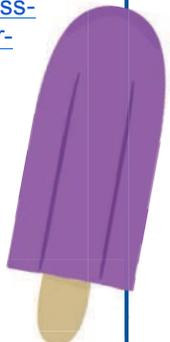
Ingredients

- 1 cup frozen blueberries
- 4 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1/2 medium avocado
- 1 medium banana
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk

Directions

1. Place all the ingredients in the jar of a blender and process until smooth.
2. Place the blended mixture in popsicle molds and freeze until frozen through, 8 hours or overnight.
3. Enjoy!

Makes 6-10 popsicles depending on the size of your molds.



Kids' Corner



Snowy Fun!

Building with Snow

On the large playground at the Lab School are a few snow structures. Building snow caves, slides, tunnels, and sculptures can be done with many different kinds of snow. For a great snow cave (Quinzee), you have to gather a large pile of snow, at least 4 feet tall and it needs to be allowed to sit overnight. The next day shovel out a space to go inside. For your first few attempts, place a few sticks through at the top, back and sides, so you will know when to stop digging out the shelter inside. You want to be sure the sides and top have at least 12" of snow to stay packed tightly.



A great snow fort can also be made by packing snow into shapes using garbage bins and other large containers and packing them with a shovel. Let them sit overnight and the next day you will be able to build structures of various shapes with them. If we get a lot of snow and it is packed hard from being stepped on, this creates wonderful compressed snow for building, but you will

Ice can also be a wonderful material for building, but it takes a bit more planning. Wait for days or nights that are near or below zero and start to fill containers with water and set them outside. Those containers can be a variety of shapes and sizes, including buckets, garbage bins, or balloons. Please keep balloons away from children. Fill the balloon with water and set outside overnight to make ice globes.

Recipe for Easy Snow Cones

Ingredients:

- Snow
- Your favorite juice

Instructions:

When a big snowfall is expected, set a large bowl outside on a table or chair and collect snow overnight or over a longer period of time. Scoop it into cups and drizzle juice, juice concentrate, or flavored syrup and enjoy.



With all of these structures you can add color by using a few drops of food coloring or watercolor to a spray bottle or to the water for ice. A book is available at the Lab School entitled: Snow Play-How to Make Forts & Slides & Winter Campfires that has many more ideas. Please feel free to check it out. Have fun and enjoy our Minnesota winter.

Prepared by Sheila Williams Ridge



Winter Creativity



Creative activities (both indoor and out!)

Eddard Stark once said, “Winter is coming.” Well, there’s no doubt about it...winter is here, and it’s not leaving for quite some time. For some, it can bring on angst and panic of the looming cabin fever with internal conversations about, “What *else* can we do? I can only watch that Minions movie so many times...I think 37 is my limit!” Well fear not – here are a few suggestions of fun activities you can do to break up the winter monotony both indoors and outside!

Activities for inside:

* Grab the sheets and blankets, kick the cushions off the couch, and create an awesome fort somewhere in the house! For extra “luxury,” you might had some safe lighting options, or maybe a small fan to help keep the “roof” inflated and give you a bit more space. And if you make it big enough, maybe have a family movie night inside your fort!

*To get out of the house, but still be surrounded by lush greenery and warmth, head to the Como Zoo – specifically the conservatory. It’s a free day in the tropics, which might be just what you need to remember that winter *won’t* last forever. While inside, you can play all kinds of “I-Spy” games, or make your own scavenger hunt.

Activities for outside:

* You can “paint” outside in the winter. Get a few spray bottles, some *washable* liquid water color paint (might be able to find it at Michael’s, Blick, or other craft stores), mix the watercolors with water, take them outside, and let the spraying/decorating of the outdoors begin! Before you know it, your white/grey house front will be alive with color. You can join and make some beautiful patterns and accents to give your house that winter “curbside appeal” that we all so desperately want in the winter.

* And maybe just for the grown-ups – There are a number of local bike shops renting *fat-tire bikes*. Put on your snow gear and see what all the fuss is about! Believe you me...it’s a lot of fun to ride around through all that snow. The very same snow that once mocked us and said, “HA! You’ll never be able to ride through me!” You’re wrong snow...so very, very wrong.

Hopefully that gives you hope and excitement for this upcoming/current winter season. Here’s also a helpful link for more ideas:

<http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2012/ten-outdoor-winter-activities>

Enjoy!

Prepared by Ross Thompson

Gym Jam 2016

Supporting the Lab School's Mission

The Lab School's annual fundraiser for gym and playground equipment will be held from 4 – 6 p.m. on Saturday, February 13. Gym Jam is a chance for kids to meet their friends and run, jump, and play with University of Minnesota athletes at the Bierman indoor football field. Freewill donations are accepted at the door. This year our goal is to raise \$4,000 to improve outdoor gathering and activity spaces for children on our playgrounds. This is a big goal, so please invite all of your friends to join us at Gym Jam!

Want to make a gift by credit or debit card? You can always do so online at:
https://makingagift.umn.edu/onlinegiving/enterOnlineGiving.do?owner=O_SMLS&desc_source=UWXX_EDHD_SITE

Winter Calendar

February 11: Parent Association of the Lab School (PALS) meeting from 6 – 7:30 p.m. in room 105

February 13: Gym Jam 2016 at Bierman Indoor Field from 4 – 6 p.m.

February 15: School Closed

March 1: Parent Education Talk with Erin Walsh: “Practical Strategies for Positive Interactions” from 6 – 7:30 p.m. in room 105

March 14 – 25: School Closed for Spring Break

Don't forget to keep sending in those wonderful natural and recycled materials!!! Thank you! *-Frances Durkin*

