

Spring 2014



Engaging Parents in Early Learning – How Parents Are Involved Matters!

Partners In Play Oath

By Jahna Poray-Taylor
Durham District School Board.

Today I will build.
Today I will create.
Today I will use my imagination.
Today I will participate.
Today I will get silly.
Today I'll dance and groove.
Today I will get messy,
Today I'll get up and move.
Today I will sing (possibly off key) but that's okay.
Because today, I am a partner,
a partner in my child's play.



One of the major goals of the Welcome to Kindergarten Program is to encourage and nurture parent engagement in the early learning of their children. The *Partners in Play Oath* was written by Jahna Poray-Taylor, a Kindergarten teacher in the Durham District School Board. Jahna shares this poem with families at their Welcome to Kindergarten Family Orientations and gives them each a copy to display at home. The oath sets the stage for the kinds of activities and resources they will be experiencing at their Welcome to Kindergarten sessions and those that the families are encouraged to do at home.

This edition of Show 'n' Tell is dedicated to sharing many of the outstanding and effective ways that schools and their community service partners can enhance and enrich their Welcome to Kindergarten Family Orientations. All of the ideas in this newsletter are from our partners, the dedicated Kindergarten teams (teachers, Early Childhood Educators and principals) and their supportive and creative community partners.

Berkshire Park School in Surrey, British Columbia

A visit from Walter the Public Library mascot was a highlight at Berkshire's Great Read Aloud. Both the teacher librarian and the public librarian shared the reading and discussion of the story with the children and their parents (many of whom are English Language Learners). Parents were reminded about and saw a demonstration of the 3 Cs of reading a book – **choice (which book to read), cuddles and conversation**. A birthday cake to celebrate the WTK program's 10th anniversary was enjoyed by all.



Welcome to Kindergarten's Great Read Aloud (GRA)!

In October 2013, 17 schools across Canada provided Great Read Aloud Workshops for families of children that had just started Kindergarten. WTK program managers worked with school kindergarten teams, and one or more community agencies to develop Great Read Aloud (GRA)

sessions using the book **10 Drowsy Dinosaurs** from the Welcome to Kindergarten bag and paper stick puppets of each dinosaur. These are just a few models of some of the ways that schools can extend the initial WTK family orientation.

Holy Trinity School in Calgary, Alberta

"Today I was a ...Palaeontologist!" was the card the children took home after digging in the sand table for dinosaur fossils, dusting them off and drawing the dinosaur they discovered. The Holy Trinity Great Read Aloud was

planned and implemented with the support of the Calgary Learning Village and Calgary Public Library. Healthy snacks, activity centres (including the palaeontology activity, read aloud, sorting, ordering, counting

and matching, puppet theatre) were all experienced and enjoyed by 40 Kindergarten students and their families.

Bishop Macdonell Catholic School in Cornwall, Ontario

Bishop Macdonell families experienced a modelled reading of 10 Drowsy Dinosaurs



using the Smart Board and four activity stations (counting dinosaur eggs, colour matching, patterning and sequencing dinosaurs, and retelling the story using the stick puppets) before a family BBQ. The entire event was planned by the school staff and their partners at the Ontario Early Years Centre.

Sherwood School in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Snacks organized by the Healthy Eating Alliance started Sherwood's GRA workshop for the French Immersion Kindergarten students and their families. This was followed by a group reading of 10 Drowsy Dinosaurs (Dix Dinosaurs Fatigué) lead by the Children's Librarian from Confederation Centre Public Library using a PowerPoint and flannel board. The interactive centre activities (retelling, numeracy, and sorting using the flannel board) were planned by the Kindergarten teacher and the school board Literacy Coach.

École public Héritage in North Bay, Ontario – The North Bay program manager worked with the staff of

Héritage and the manager of the childcare to provide a workshop for three groups of Kindergarten children and their parents and a small group of younger children in the childcare. The Bienvenue à la maternelle song was sung by everyone to start the sessions and the stick puppets marched one at a time into the story as it was read aloud. A dinosaur song followed (to the tune of If You are Happy and You Know It) the read aloud with all of the children and parents joining in on the actions of snapping, touching their noses, clapping etc. As with most GRA sessions, a healthy snack was enjoyed by all.

New to the WTK bags in 2014 - the Welcome to Kindergarten CD of Songs and Activity Ball!

In 2014 all WTK bags include our CD of Songs and the blow-up activity ball. Family activity with both of these resources will support the early learning development of the young child. Schools are encouraged to plan centres at their orientations around these new resources. Here are some suggestions that we have gathered from Kindergarten teams.

Activity Ball

Involve families in one of the activities on listed on the Ball Activities (http://thelearningpartnership.adobeconnect.com/wtk_ball_activities) page e.g. in groups of 4, practice throwing and catching the ball on a beach towel, share with the families that a fun activity like this helps their child develop hand-eye coordination, small muscle control, ability to share, co-operate, pay attention.



WTK CD of Songs

Jump Up, Jump Down is one of the songs on the CD. Play the song and ask the families to sing and perform actions to the words with you. Explain how doing this fun activity will help children to listen and follow instructions; learn concept words: up, down, around; develop physical/body awareness.

Many other activities are suggested on the Music Activity Page which is included in the bag.



Special Events:

Bob Schneider Concerts

- York Catholic and York Region School Boards – March 22 at YCDSB Centre for the Arts in Thornhill
- Durham District School Board – April 12 at Regent Theatre in Oshawa.
- Toronto District and Toronto Catholic School Boards – May 25 at Al Green Theatre in Toronto

For more information contact KRallis@thelearningpartnership.ca

Early Years Family and Community Engagement Symposium – May 13-15 at Fort Garry Hotel in Winnipeg. For more information go to: <http://www.thelearningpartnership.ca/events/welcome-to-kindergarten-early-years-symposium>

Welcome to Kindergarten Program Team

National – Karen Rallis, Sue Rowan, Stefania Silisteanu, Alban Joxhe, Kim Miller

Alberta – Rosalie Bain, Lorraine Berg

British Columbia – Barbara Claridge, Patricia Shields

Manitoba – Deb Thompson

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