

Welcome to the April 2006 edition of Iowa Public Television's (IPTV) Ready To Learn (RTL) eNews. The purpose of this free monthly electronic newsletter is to keep families, educators, and child care providers informed of the great resources IPTV and our partners have to offer those who care for children ages birth to eight years of age. RTL is public television's response to a critical national education goal: All children will enter school "ready to learn."

RTL eNews for April 2006

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_____The Learning Triangle_____

Young children learn by doing—by interacting with people and objects around them. To learn, they need to experience things again and again. RTL uses the learning triangle to teach children skills and concepts by using PBS KIDS programs, books, and activities. Engage children in these theme-related activities in any order and at any time. Point out the connections between the segment they VIEW, the book they READ, and the activity they DO. The repetition and variety of media used reinforces the skills and concepts you teach.

_____How do you use the RTL Learning Triangle? Monthly Contest_____

IPTV's RTL service wants to hear from you! How do you use the RTL Learning Triangle? Send an email to Lisa Albers at lisa@iptv.org describing your triangle and how it worked for you and the children in your care. All emails received by the end of each month will be included in a drawing for 10 FREE children's books.

_____ABC's Theme Learning Triangle_____

A print version of this ABC's Theme Learning Triangle can be found at the following location:

In English: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/triangleabc406.pdf>

In Spanish: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/triangleabc406spanish.pdf>

Learning the names of the alphabet letters is an important skill for children to learn. When you are teaching children to name letters, make it fun! You can teach letters everyday and everywhere. When you are shopping, driving, looking at books or magazines, and preparing meals, point out the letters that you see and name them. Then, ask

your child to say the letter name with you. You will need to practice naming letters with your child many times before he/she is able to look at a letter and say, on his/her own, "That is a ____." It is a good idea to first introduce capital letters and then lowercase or small letters.

READ IT

1. Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin, Jr.—In a rhythmic alphabet chant, all the letters race one another up the coconut tree. (Ages 4-8)
2. Eating the Alphabet by Lois Ehlert—An alphabetical tour of the world of fruits and vegetables, from apricot and artichoke to yam and zucchini. (Ages 4-8)
3. Farm Alphabet Book by Jane Miller—An alphabet book with color photos of the farm environment, accompanied by explanatory text, illustrating each letter. (Infant - Preschool)

VIEW IT

BETWEEN THE LIONS – Every episode features letters, letter families, and letter sounds.

* Every Monday-Friday at 2:30 p.m.

SESAME STREET – Every episode features a letter of the day.

(Notice how often the letter of the day appears on the screen while you hear its spoken sound. Then it the letter is related to a word that begins with that letter sound, and the word is also presented on the screen.)

* Every Monday-Friday at 9 a.m.

BARNEY & FRIENDS – Easy as ABC

* Tuesday, April 25, 2006 at 10:30 a.m.

Barney and the children find creative ways to teach Baby Bop how to spell her name.

DO IT

1. March Around the Alphabet – Write each letter of the alphabet on a large index card. Put the capital letter on one side and lowercase on the other. Spread the alphabet out on the floor. Have the children create a circle around the alphabet. As upbeat tempo music is played, the children "March Around the Alphabet." Instruct the children to freeze, bend down, and pick up a letter near their toes when the music stops. Have the children hold their letter cards way up high and wait to be called upon to tell what letter they have in their hands.
2. Use this gross motor activity to help teach letter identification. Each time a new letter is introduced, use colorful masking tape or plastic tape to create a giant version of that letter on your floor. Then instruct youngsters to "walk, hop, crawl, or otherwise move" along the lines of the letter.
3. Erasing with Water – This activity is a fun way to practice the alphabet, numbers, or specific words such as the child's name. Materials: Chalkboard space or chalkboard slate for each child, paint brushes and containers of water. With chalk, the adult will write the letters, numbers, or words for the children to practice. Have the children dip their brush in the water and "erase" what you have written by painting over it with the water. Ask the child to say the letter or number name as he/she is erasing it. After children have mastered this activity, children can work in teams of two, with one child with the chalk and the other with the brush and water. Then they can switch roles.

_____Environment Theme Learning Triangle_____

A print version of this Environment Theme Learning Triangle can be found at the following location:

In English: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/triangleenvironment406.pdf>

In Spanish: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/triangleenvironment406spanish.pdf>

Fred Rogers said, "Taking good care of the earth is one way children can learn to take good care of themselves." Simple activities like reusing old things in new ways, recycling newspapers, aluminum cans and glass containers, and picking up trash are all things children can do to take care of the earth.

READ IT

1. I'm a Seed by Jean Marzollo—A pumpkin seed and a marigold seed grow into plants side by side. (This book is also available in Spanish.) (Ages 4-8)
2. The Earth and I by Frank Asch—A child explains how he and the Earth dance and sing together and take turns listening to each other (Ages 4-8)

3. Rain Forest by Helen Cowcher—From the tapirs roaming its cool floor to the Blue Morpho butterflies fluttering in its canopy, the rain forest is a peaceful place until man's machines endanger its existence and threaten its lush beauty. (This book is also available in Spanish.) (Ages 4-8)

VIEW IT

IT'S A BIG BIG WORLD – In the series, children learn that there is a lot that they can discover about science, animals, geography, and the big, big world around them.

* Every Monday-Friday at 10 a.m.

PBS KIDS SHARE THE EARTH DAY

* Friday, April 21, 2006 at 10 a.m.

This 2-hour special event will show children how they can make a big difference! You can't fit the world into a washing machine, but you'll find out the real ways that we can keep the world and water clean. It's a Big Big World, Dragon Tales and Clifford throw a party for the planet, with new music from Milkshake.

CLIFFORD'S PUPPY DAYS – Celebrating Spring #205a

* Friday, April 21, 2006 at 4 p.m.

The kids gather to turn a vacant lot into a city garden. But without a plan, things turn into a chaotic mess. It's only when they finally work together that they create a beautiful garden.

BOB THE BUILDER – The Environment #101

* Monday, April 24, 2006 at 3 p.m.

Bob and the can-do crew get back to nature, meet animals and experience the great outdoors as they get the job done and learn about the world outside the building yard.

READING RAINBOW – Once There Was a Tree #1009

* Tuesday, April 25, 2006 at 2 p.m.

In this episode, Levar shows the kids about the life and growth of trees. From the wilderness to our own back yard, Levar points out how trees grow while creating and sustaining other forms of life.

DO IT

1. Armed with plastic garbage bags, help clean up a park or the neighborhood with your children. Be sure to use extra care when working near traffic.

2. Create a sculpture out of things we might normally throw away such as milk caps, string, ribbon, used wrapping paper, spools, empty boxes, toilet or paper towel tubes, plastic lids and containers, tin cans, etc. Talk about other ways you might use each of these things. For added effect, spray paint the completed sculpture with a single color.

3. Sing with your children. Try this one:

Pick It Up!! (Tune: London Bridge)

Keep our water safe and clean,
safe and clean,
safe and clean.

See the litter, pick it up,
pick it up,
pick it up.

Don't pollute your local stream,
pick the trash up!

See the litter, pick it up,
don't be a litter bug!

4. Teach children discrimination as well as counting and sorting by making a few "recycling bins" complete with a few paper, plastic, and aluminum items that can be sorted into each bin.

5. Go on a nature walk. Have the child pick up objects from nature such as rocks, bark, grass, leaves, flowers, nuts, etc., and put them into a bag. As you walk along encourage your child to talk about what they see and hear in nature. Allow them to observe and ask questions. When you return home, work together using art supplies and the gathered items the child picked up on the nature walk to create a collage.

_____IPTV Kids Schedule for Spring 2006_____

A print version of the IPTV Kids Schedule for Spring 2006 in English and Spanish can be found at the following location:

<http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/06SpringKidSchedule.pdf>

IPTV broadcasts 11 hours of non-violent, non-commercial, educational children's television programming each Monday through Friday. However, IPTV does NOT recommend that children spend all of their free time in front of the television. In fact, we encourage adults to place strict limits on the amount of time the children in their lives spend with the television or other screen media, such as computers and video games. This schedule is provided to assist children and adults as they plan their television viewing.

Monday—Friday

6:30 a.m.	Postcards from Buster
7:00 a.m.	Arthur
7:30 a.m.	Clifford the Big Red Dog
8:00 a.m.	Dragon Tales
8:30 a.m.	Caillou
9:00 a.m.	Sesame Street
10:00 a.m.	It's a Big Big World
10:30 a.m.	Barney & Friends
11:00 a.m.	Thomas & Friends
11:30 a.m.	Caillou
Noon	The Berenstain Bears
12:30 p.m.	The Big Comfy Couch
1:00 p.m.	Jakers! The Adventures of Piggley Winks
1:30 p.m.	Cyberchase
2:00 p.m.	Reading Rainbow
2:30 p.m.	Between the Lions
3:00 p.m.	Bob the Builder
3:30 p.m.	Dragon Tales
4:00 p.m.	Clifford the Big Red Dog
4:30 p.m.	Arthur
5:00 p.m.	Clifford the Big Red Dog (from the previous day)

Saturday

7:00 a.m.	It's a Big Big World
7:30 a.m.	Clifford the Big Red Dog

Sunday

8:00 a.m.	Sesame Street
9:00 a.m.	Angelina Ballerina
9:30 a.m.	Bob the Builder
10:00 a.m.	Thomas & Friends

_____Program Schedule, Episode Descriptions and Record Rights for PBS Kids Programs_____

Finding Program Schedule and Episode Descriptions:

- * Go to Web site: iptv.org
- * Click on "TV Schedule" button at the top left side of the page.
- * Click on the program to find a description for today's episode of the program.
- * To find future episode descriptions, click on a date in the left column to find the description of the episode that will be shown on that specific date. Reading them will help you identify episodes that correspond to your curricular themes. The listed dates are the next 28 air dates of the program you've selected. Upcoming TV schedules on www.iptv.org are updated by the 15th of each month for the following month.

"Record only, one year tape and erase. No duplication allowed."

What does that mean?

Educators may record a program from the broadcast. The recording may then be used in an educational setting and retained as long as that program airs on IPTV. No copies may be made from the original recording. If available, educators also may borrow a recording from a lending library, such as the media centers in Iowa's Area Education Agencies.

_____April Focus on Media Literacy_____

Effective TV Viewing

You do not need to do all these things every time you turn on the TV set. In fact, if you try, your child will likely be overwhelmed.

Keep in mind that your child has already developed TV viewing habits that probably do not include active viewing. Don't expect him or her to change the way he or she views over night. Instead, pick the techniques that feel comfortable to you. Try different activities on different days. Remember that it's okay if your child just wants to watch quietly sometimes.

React to what you see.

Making comments like, "That's a good idea," or "I'd feel bad if someone did that to me," lets your child know what you think and models how to use language to challenge what the television says. Reacting lets children know that they can question what they see on TV.

Ask questions.

Encourage your child to predict what will happen next or ask what he or she would do if he or she were in the character's place.

Be active.

Point, cheer, groan, imitate. Invent games in which children stand up every time a particular word is said.

Listen to your child.

Encourage your child to ask questions about what he or she sees and to give his or her own opinions. Help him or her expand the thinking process by asking follow-up questions.

Identify emotions.

Children who can learn to recognize and name emotions in themselves and others are more likely to develop empathy and to express themselves with words instead of violence. You can help your child practice recognizing emotions by asking him or her how a particular character feels and how he or she knows. Point out clues to use, like facial expressions and background music.

Play language games.

Repeat new words. Imitate sounds. Prior to viewing, agree on a specific action your child will do every time he or she hears a particular language device like a rhyme or alliteration (e.g., sounds). To extend the learning, let your child use alliteration to name things in his or her room (e.g., Ricky Rug or Derrick Doorknob).

_____Series Spotlight_____

BETWEEN THE LIONS airs Monday-Friday at noon.

What is **BETWEEN THE LIONS**?

BETWEEN THE LIONS is an award-winning PBS television series named for a family of lions—Theo, Cleo, Lionel, and Leona—who run a library like no other. The doors "between the lions" swing open to reveal a magical place where book characters come to life, vowels sing, and knights joust to create words. Each episode is designed to sharpen the literacy skills of its viewers while playfully presenting the many joys of reading. Approximately 5 million viewers enjoy **BETWEEN THE LIONS** each week.

What's in **BETWEEN THE LIONS**?

The series is based on evidence-based practices and the recommendations of a team of literacy experts. Each child-friendly, half-hour is loaded with stories, songs, rhymes, dynamic print on screen, and many types of wordplay. The series includes segments that foster:

- phonological awareness

- book knowledge and appreciation
- print concepts
- early writing
- alphabet knowledge
- language development (listening and understanding, speaking and communicating)

Ongoing research confirms that when young children view the series on a regular basis, they show significant gains in reading skills and motivation.

Pounce on the BETWEEN THE LIONS Web site at www.pbskids.org/lions

An extensive BETWEEN THE LIONS Web site offers songs to sing along with, stories to print out and read, interactive games, and lots more. Adults can find information on the show's curriculum along with helpful literacy tips and printable activities.

_____April Feature_____

Encouraging Children to be Scientists

“Science is a ‘process of finding out and a system for organizing and reporting discoveries.’ Children who are in the process of observing, thinking, and reflecting on actions and events are doing science. When they are organizing factual information into more meaningful concepts, problem solving, and acting on their curiosity, they are doing science. In trying to understand how the work of scientists is related to their lives and investigations, they are doing science. They are not doing science when they are merely listening to someone talk about science, reading about it in a textbook, or learning facts and memorizing formulas.” (1)

Early care and education providers can encourage children to be scientists in at least six ways:

1. MARVEL TOGETHER AT THE WORLD.

We do this automatically with babies when we say, “Look at the tree, Patrick. See the green leaves?” As children grow, continue to help them see the wonders around them. “Isn’t that a pretty butterfly? Watch it go from flower to flower. What do you think the butterfly is doing?”

These kinds of interactions with children help them develop their observation skills--an important skill for scientists to learn. To gain as much information as possible from the world around them and from each experience, children need to know how to use their senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching) and their background knowledge. Talking about the world around them is one way to help children develop observation skills. Soon they will say, “Look at the bug on the slide, teacher. Why does it roll into a ball when I touch it?”

2. ANSWER QUESTIONS CHILDREN ASK.

As any parent and care provider knows, the “why” word is second only to “no” in children’s vocabulary! While we may grow tired of the questions, if you try your best to answer them, you will encourage children’s interest in science. If the children are in the middle of an activity and simply want information, a straightforward answer may be best.

Child: “Where does the sun go at night?”

Teacher: “Lets get a ball and a flashlight and I will tell you. OK, turn the flashlight on and pretend it is the Sun. The ball is the Earth. Each day the Earth turns one time like this. When our side of the Earth is turned away from the Sun, it is night. When our side of the Earth faces the Sun, it is day. See?”

At other times, you may want to help children arrive at the answer themselves. Having books, computers, appropriate television programs or video clips, as well as additional opportunities to explore the concept they have a question about can help them find the answer.

3. FIND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS THAT STUMP YOU.

When children ask questions you can't answer such as "Why is the sky blue?" or "How does a telephone work?" your first response, especially if you are busy, might be "I don't know" and continue with your work. This response squelches scientific interest. Instead, take time to respond, "I don't know, let's find out." If you can't drop everything to find the answer, write the children's question on paper or a blackboard and tell them when you will have time to work with them to find the answer. Any effort you make to indicate you will try to find the answer together will further their interest in science. It is important that you give children accurate information rather than foster misconceptions.

4. CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN TO EXPLORE AND EXPERIMENT.

Provide many opportunities for active, "hands-on" involvement with real objects. Consider having a place for permanent displays such as animal cages and water and sand tables. Also have a place for unique and wonderful objects such as a bird's nest or fossils. Change the objects in this area often.

Give children plenty of time to interact with the objects. Williams, Rockwell and Sherwood, in their book, "Mudpies to Magnets: A Preschool Science Curriculum," state: "To fully absorb ideas in science or any other area, children need the opportunity to repeat activities and experiences several times under many circumstances. They need to explore the same concept in a variety of settings. The children who are told about plants during group time and color a worksheet that says plants need water may retain a little of that information. But the children who handle and discuss droopy dandelions, try to grow lima beans with and without water, and have their attention drawn to a wilted plant so they can notice how it perks up when watered will know, through their own experiences, that plants need water. This is the kind of learning we want to encourage." (2)

5. ASK CHILDREN QUESTIONS.

"Can you tell me what you see?" "What did you hear?" "Can we talk about what we just saw happen?" "Can you draw a picture of what you just saw?" "How are these alike?" "How are these different?" "What happened first?" An open-ended question such as these help stimulate children's thinking, develops their observation skills and encourages them to use "scientific" vocabulary words. Remember to wait for at least five seconds after asking a question to allow children time to think of a response. You will find that the quality as well as quantity of the responses will improve.

Accept all answers to your questions. "When children make errors, plan further experiences or suggest other approaches that may help the children discover the correct answer or have more success with individual tasks." (3)

6. DEBRIEF WITH THE CHILDREN AFTER EACH SCIENCE ACTIVITY.

Doing so will help you evaluate the concepts the children understand and those areas where more experiences are needed.

Ideas for science activities can be found at PBS TeacherSource – From the Start Web site (<http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/prek2.htm>). Activities are grouped according to the following categories: atmosphere and space science, classification, design and invention, earth science, life science, physical science, and transportation.

The CYBERCHASE Web site (<http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/supercyberchasescience/index.html>) contains mostly math activities but there are some for science.

IT'S A BIG BIG WORLD is a new children's program devoted to science that airs on IPTV Monday-Friday at 10 a.m. See the IT'S A BIG BIG WORLD Web site (<http://pbskids.org/bigbigworld/home.html>) for a description of the program and lots of other fun activities and resources.

The following link takes you to a two-page document offering more math and science resources for young children from IPTV and PBS:
<http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/mathscincerresources.pdf>

Footnotes

(1) p. 297. Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: Best Practices in Early Childhood.

(2) p. 18. Mudpies to Magnets: A Preschool Science Curriculum.

(3) p. 306. Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: Best Practices in Early Childhood.

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Williams, Robert, Rockwell, Robert and Sherwood, Elizabeth. Mudpies to Magnets: A Preschool Science Curriculum. Beltsville, Maryland: Gryphon House. 1987.

_____Tip of the Month_____

TWO NEW IPTV Kids Clubhouse Healthy Minutes

In February, we encouraged you to visit the IPTV Kids Clubhouse Healthy Minutes Web site at <http://www.iptv.org/kids/healthyminutes>. If you have, GREAT! We hope you found the information interesting and fun! If you have not—WHY NOT? Do it, we promise that you won't be disappointed!

Since February, IPTV has added two brand new Healthy Minutes bringing the grand total to seven Healthy Minutes segments and resources available from the Web site. The two new spots are titled, "All Aboard the Grain Train" and "Healthy Hero." "All Aboard the Grain Train" teaches kids about whole grains, while "Healthy Hero" helps kids recognize the "healthy heroes" in their lives and how they can become a "healthy hero" too.

IPTV Kids Clubhouse Healthy Minutes encourage positive health choices, good nutritional practices, personal safety, good decision making, and many other important skills that promote health and wellness!

Healthy Minutes videos and companion resources help build Learning Triangles with video, activities, and books. The Learning Triangle is a model of three components:

1. VIEW. Healthy Minutes videos are streamed online.
2. READ. Related children's books are recommended.
3. DO. Children are encouraged to explore the content through online resources.

Healthy Minute Resources for Parent & Teachers can be found at the following Web site:
<http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/HealthyMinutes.cfm>

_____Two Important April Dates_____

1. April 12, 2006 - National Drop Everything and Read (D.E.A.R) Day
D.E.A.R. stands for Drop Everything and Read. Schools often have D.E.A.R. time (sometimes called D.I.R.T., S.S.R., U.S.S.R., S.Q.U.I.R.T., F.V.R. or P.O.W.E.R.). It's when kids can read and enjoy the books they want, just for the pleasure of reading and with no questions asked!

This year, on April 12, 2006, we're celebrating National "Drop Everything and Read" Day. It's a partnership effort of Reading Rockets (www.readingrockets.org), the National Education Association (NEA), the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association, and HarperCollins Children's Books. The aim of this nationwide initiative is to encourage families to designate a special time to "drop everything and read" at home. So, on April 12th, families will be encouraged to take at least 30 minutes to put aside all distractions and enjoy books together.

The 90th birthday of beloved Newbery Medal-winning author Beverly Cleary is the official date for D.E.A.R. Day. Cleary's most popular children's book character, Ramona Quimby, is the program's official spokesperson. (The concept of "Drop Everything and Read" is referenced in the second chapter of Ramona Quimby, Age 8).

Teachers can request one free set of D.E.A.R. materials, which includes a poster, reproducible handouts, and a DVD featuring Beverly Cleary. Please see the D.E.A.R. web site for details.

Visit the following Web site for more details about D.E.A.R Day: <http://www.dropeverythingandread.com/>

2. April 30, 2006 - Día de los Niños (Day of the Child)

Día de los Niños/Día de los Libros (Day of the Child/Day of the Book) is a celebration based on childhood and literacy. Borrowing from the traditional Mexican holiday "El día de los Niños," the American version was expanded to include literacy, and in 1998, the U.S. Congress officially designated April 30 as "Day of the Child."

Visit the following Web site for activity and resources to help you celebrate:

<http://www.readingrockets.org/calendar/dia>

_____Resources for April_____

Reading Rockets Current Newsletter—This monthly newsletter provides information for families and educators about teaching kids to read and helping those who struggle.

www.readingrockets.org/subscribe/

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS:

- * Celebrate Reading!
- * Teleconference and Webcast: "From Babbling to Books"
- * Books of the Month: Music Makers

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

- * Making Music: Literacy Tips for Parents

IDEAS FOR EDUCATORS

- * Reading 101: Text Comprehension
- * Mrs. Dr. Seuss! An Interview with Audrey Geisel
- * Free Webcast for Teachers — "Assessment of English Language Learners"

PBS Parents Electronic Newsletter

Each week this electronic newsletter targets providers, caregivers, and parents bringing activities from favorite children's programs, events in your local community, and headlines from the PBS Parents Web site. To receive this FREE electronic newsletter, subscribe at the following Web site:

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/> (The link is towards the bottom of the page.)

Mister Rogers' Neighborhood *Mad Feelings* Newsletter—A monthly newsletter dealing with anger management and challenging behaviors in young children, including articles, activities and tips.

<http://www.fci.org/madfeelings/default.asp>

_____Child Development Tip of the Month_____

"Just in Time" Parenting Information - <http://www.parentinginfo.org/>

Finding reliable parenting information when you're a new parent can be a challenge. There are many books, and articles - some good and some not so good. How do you know what to read - especially when you're busy and there's just so little time?

Fortunately, some of the nation's leading universities have teamed up to provide parenting newsletters that provide just the right information at the right time. Each newsletter provides information geared to the specific age of a child. For example, these "age-paced" newsletters provide parents of a six month old with important suggestions about starting solid food and parents of a twelve month old with information about learning to walk. The information is accurate, reliable and research based - yet quick and easy to read for busy parents "on the go."

Though each newsletter series contains information about caring for and teaching very young children, each series offers information specific to its state sponsor. Some series just cover parenting babies - others offer information for parents of children up to five years. All are in English - and a few of the series are also available in Spanish.

_____Subscribe/Unsubscribe_____

If you received this message from a friend, you can sign up for IPTV's RTL eNews by going to www.iptv.org/enews.cfm. From there you will be able to select from a variety of lists from IPTV to help you be more connected.

If you would like to unsubscribe from the IPTV's RTL eNews please go to www.iptv.org/enews.cfm or respond to this email with "Remove" as the subject line.

Feel free to forward this message to a friend.