

Welcome to the April 2007 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 8 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 2007

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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 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.

_____Animal's Theme Learning Triangle_____

Print versions in English and Spanish of this Learning Triangle can be found at the following location:

<http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/downloads.cfm>

Children are usually interested in all kinds of animals. Point out dogs, birds, insects and worms that they see everyday. Talk about what the animals eat and how they move. Read books that teach children real things about animals. Pets can play an important role in children's lives. They can teach children responsibility if you let children help take care of the animals. Pets can be good listeners. Children can talk to them about what is going on in their lives.

READ IT

1. Bugs! Bugs! Bugs! by Bob Barner
2. Bugs for Lunch by Margery Facklam
3. Butterfly/Mariposa by Susan Canizares (Bilingual in English and Spanish)
4. Wonderful Worms by Linda Glaser
5. What is an Insect?/Que es un insecto? by Susan Canizares and Mary Reed (Bilingual in English and Spanish)
6. Perro Grande...Perro Pequeno/Big Dog...Little Dog by P.D. Eastman (Bilingual in English and Spanish)

VIEW IT

CURIOUS GEORGE – Curious George Takes a Dive #129b

- * Tuesday, April 24, 2007 at 7 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- * Wednesday, April 25 at 11:30 a.m.
- * Monday, April 30, 2007 at 7 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- * Tuesday, May 1, 2007 at 11:30 a.m.

George makes friends with a turtle down at Lake Wanasink Lake but worries that because the turtle has no thumbs, it's going to get a lot of water up its nose when it goes into the lake. The solution is to bring the turtle home and keep it in the bathtub. But the turtle is just not happy in the bathtub and when George brings home fish and weeds and frogs from the lake to keep it company, The Man with the Yellow Hat isn't very happy either.

IT'S A BIG, BIG WORLD – Flying Fish #136a

- * Thursday, April 26, 2007 at 8:30 a.m.

When Ick tells Wartz that there is a kind of fish that can fly, Wartz doesn't believe that can be true. But, when he and Burdette visit Snook, they learn that there are all kinds of amazing animals in the world, including fish, squirrels, and snakes that glide through the air!

READING RAINBOW – Chickens Aren't the Only Ones #408

- * Monday, April 30, 2007 at 2 p.m.

Chickens are not the only animals that lay eggs. In this book we learn that many animals lay eggs. This means they are oviparous. A look at all the different kinds of animals that hatch from eggs is the emphasis of this episode.

DO IT

- * Ask the children how many know someone who has a pet. Make a bar on a chart. Write the number under the bar. Then ask how many of them have pets. Add a second bar to the chart. Next, ask how many have fish, dogs, cats, etc. and add those bars. You have just created a bar graph. Talk about the different heights of the bars. Talk about why the bars are different, and what they mean.
- * Play "Guess the Animals." Provide children with animal cookies, or pictures of animals. Invite children to choose a cookie, or a picture out of a bag. Tell them to make the noise the animal makes or move like the animal does. See if the other children can guess what animal each child is.
- * Go to a zoo, veterinarian's office, farm or visit a friend who has animals. Check out the different animals and learn more about them!
- * Play the "Animal Walk" game. The leader walks like an animal and the rest follow. Play the game again and again walking like a different kind of animal each time. The leader could be an animal from the zoo, farm, or a wild animal.
- * Find pictures of animals in magazines or have the children draw them and make a collage. Write the animal's name on the paper. Talk about where the animals live, how many legs they have and what color they are. Help the children notice how the animals are different. Example: A cat has paws; a bird has _____ (wings).

_____Environment Theme Learning Triangle_____

Print versions in English and Spanish of this Learning Triangle can be found at the following location:

<http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/downloads.cfm>

April is the month we celebrate Earth Day. Preschool and Kindergarten years are an important time to teach children how to take good care of the earth. Simple activities like picking up trash, nursing old things in new ways, and recycling cans are things they can do to take care of the earth. Another way children can help the earth is to plant a garden with you. Plants are very important to us. They make lots of oxygen for us to breathe. They make our earth a beautiful place.

READ IT

1. From Seed to Pumpkin by Jan Kottke
2. Dandelions: Stars in the Grass by Mia Posada
3. This is the Sunflower by Lola M. Schaefer
4. Grow Flower Grow! by Lisa Bruce
5. The Surprise Garden by Zoe Hall
6. The Earth and I by Frank Asch
7. The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry

VIEW IT

ARTHUR – Arthur Cleans Up #125b

* Monday, April 23, 2007 at 6:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Elwood City's park is in sad shape, and after grumbling about it, the kids find themselves volunteered to clean it up. And even though it's a lot of work, in the end they all decide it feels great to make a difference.

THE BERENSTAIN BEARS – Don't Pollute (Anymore) #125

* Friday, April 27, 2007 at noon.

The cubs learn about recycling and endangered species.

DRAGON TALES – Rise and Bloom #302a

*Tuesday, April 30, 2007 at 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

Max really wants to see the Bursting Blossoms bloom in Dragon Land - a spectacular, once-a-year event. This special event only happens at sunrise, and Max just can't seem to shake off his sleepiness and get himself going. Luckily, Max's friends have some strategies to help him feel more awake. When they finally arrive (fully awake) on Blossom Ridge, just in time for the sunrise, they are surprised to find that the Bursting Blossoms need some help waking up. Max springs to action using his recently learned techniques to help the flowers shake off their sleepiness, and everyone celebrates as the amazing blossoms burst with color and shower sparkly pollen all around them

DO IT

* Help clean up a park or the neighborhood.

* Sing environment songs. Pick It Up!! (Tune: London Bridge)

Keep our water safe and clean,

safe and clean,

safe and clean.

Don't pollute your local stream,

pick the trash up!

See the litter, pick it up,

pick it up,

pick it up.

See the litter, pick it up,

don't be a litter bug!

* Teach children counting by asking them to sort paper, plastic, and aluminum items that can be sorted into bins.

Count how many are in each bin and put these items in order from big to little.

* Go on a nature walk. Have children pick up objects from nature such as rocks, bark, grass, leaves, flowers, nuts, etc., and put them into a bag. As you walk, encourage children to talk about what they see and hear in nature. Allow them to observe and ask questions. When you finish, work together to create a poster of items picked up on the nature walk.

* Talk to children about saving water when washing hands, and brushing teeth. Raise children's consciousness to recycle more at their child care center. Teach children to sing their ABC's while washing their hands, and turn the water off as soon as they are done.

* For more information and activities on Kids and Gardening go to www.extention.iastate.edu/GrowingintheGarden/kids.html.

* Plant an inside garden. Give children a small cup full of dirt. Have children plant seeds in the cup. Water the seeds daily. Keep a journal. Children can draw pictures of what they see and predict what they might see tomorrow.

_____IPTV Kids Schedule for Spring 2007_____

A print version of the IPTV Kids Schedule for Spring 2007 in English and Spanish can be found at the following location: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/Fall06KidsSchedule.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.	Arthur
7:00 a.m.	Curious George
7:30 a.m.	Clifford the Big Red Dog
8:00 a.m.	Dragon Tales
8:30 a.m.	It's a Big Big World
9:00 a.m.	Sesame Street
10:00 a.m.	Caillou
10:30 a.m.	Barney & Friends
11:00 a.m.	Thomas & Friends
11:30 a.m.	Curious George
Noon	The Berenstain Bears
12:30 p.m.	The Big Comfy Couch
1:00 p.m.	Bob the Builder
1:30 p.m.	Cyberchase
2:00 p.m.	Reading Rainbow
2:30 p.m.	Between the Lions
3:00 p.m.	Postcards from Buster (Monday-Thursday) / Fetch! with Ruff Ruffman (Friday)
3:30 p.m.	Dragon Tales
4:00 p.m.	Clifford the Big Red Dog
4:30 p.m.	Arthur
5:00 p.m.	Curious George

Saturday

6:30 a.m.	The Zula Patrol
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.	Bob the Builder
9:30 a.m.	Thomas & Friends
10:00 a.m.	Danger Rangers (ends Feb. 25) Design Squad (begins March 25)

_____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 may also borrow a recording from a lending library, such as the media centers in Iowa's Area Education Agencies.

_____FREE Opportunities on the ICN_____

This spring, Iowa Public Television is offering a **FREE** series of eight (8) ICN events for libraries, child care programs and schools, recommended ages 3-7. The overall goal of series is to provide hands-on science activities to young children to help them understand the relevance to science in their lives and increase their interest in the environment. **Outreach funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.** The series runs from April 3 through April 25 and includes the following titles:

April 3 – Zoo Friends: Chicken's Aren't the Only Ones - Join educators from the Blank Park Zoo for this 'egg-cellent' learning experience! Students have an 'egg-citing' time learning about nature's perfect package the egg. An 'egg-traordinary' egg hunt and 'egg-amples' of various animals 'egg-cite' student imaginations. Live animals, from the Blank Park Zoo are on-hand for the session.

April 10 – To Be A Seed - Experience the awakening of life as students learn about seeds. The parts of a seed will be explored by dissecting a seed during the session. Students will learn what is needed to get a seed to grow and the basic parts of a plant.

April 11 – Reading with a Zookeeper - Join this interactive session with a zookeeper as he shares information about his career with students. Learn about the animals he cares for, the amount of food they eat, and the other various duties that have to be carried out at the zoo. Students will also learn about an animal's coloration and the reasons behind it.

April 17 – Start with Seeds - Seeds are everywhere! You can find them in the food you eat, on the ground under trees, and hidden in your favorite flowers. Janet Anderson and Linda Naeve from ISU Extension will share the Start with Seeds lesson.

April 19 – Sing a Song of Science - Are you looking for a fun way to teach your students about science? Music is a great way to make science fun. In this session Lewis Major, Polk County Naturalist, introduces students to some great educational songs about soil, bats, bugs, beaver, turtles, and more.

April 20 – It's a Big Big World Earth Day Celebration - Students will celebrate Earth Day by learning about what they can do to help the environment. We will read a story, do some hands-on activities, watch a short video clip and more in this fun-filled session.

April 23 – Reading with a Naturalist - A naturalist from the Warren County Conservation Board will read Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax* aloud to the students. Students explore the exciting world of environmental education and learn more about the naturalist and other related careers.

April 25 – Stories and More: Mapping Our Environment - Student will learn about their environment and how we use maps to find our way. Using the Ready to Learn Learning Triangle model, this event will feature stories, video, poems, songs and hands-on activities.

Check out the full event descriptions and register online:

* Go to the Iowa Distance Learning Database K-12 Calendar: http://www3.iptv.org/iowa_database/cal-default.cfm?&month=04-28-2007

* Click on the event title.

* Read description, then scroll to the bottom and click on the “Register here” button.

* Enter your zip code.

* Click on your school or choose another option (Library, Childcare provider, Homeschooler, or Other) if you are not affiliated with a school. (Where you are located and not where the ICN classroom is located). Fill out all the information on the form.

* Click the “Register Here!” button.

Hurry! There is a site limit of 12 for each session.

_____April Focus on Media Literacy_____

Children's Book List on Media Awareness

Children today are exposed to a variety of media and mixed messages from that media. Sharing the books below with your child is one way to introduce them to different kinds of media and start discussions about their advantages and disadvantages.

Arthur's TV Trouble

by Marc Brown Reading level: Ages 4-8 When Arthur sees advertisements for the amazing doggy Treat Timer, he decides to earn enough money to buy it for his dog Pal.--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Aunt Chip and the Great Triple Creek Dam Affair

by Patricia Polacco Reading level: Ages 4-8 Aunt Chip saves the town of Triple Creek, where everyone has forgotten how to read because of the invasion of television.

The Bionic Bunny Show

by Mark Brown and Laurene Krasny Brown Reading level: Infant-Preschool As an ordinary rabbit in real life is portrayed as a bionic bunny on his television series, the reader views all the production efforts that provide that illusion.

Book!

by George Ella Lyon Reading level: Ages 4-8 This poem compares a book to a house, a treasure chest, a farm, and a tree full of leaves.

Box-Head Boy

by Christine M. Winn Reading level: Ages 9-12 Denny spends so much time watching TV that one day his head ends up inside the set.

Ellen's Terrible TV Troubles

by Rachna Gilmore Reading level: Ages 4-8 Ellen gets more than she bargained for when her television brings her favorite characters to life in her living room.

The Great TV Turn-Off

by Beverly Lewis Reading level: Ages 9-12 Eric and his neighbors on Blossom Hill Lane agree to give up television for one week.

Mouse TV

by Matt Novak Reading level: Ages 4-8 Each member of the Mouse family wants to watch something different on television, but they discover a solution to their problem one night when the television does not work.

Mama Rex & T: Turn Off the TV

by Rachel Vail On a stormy Saturday, T and Mama Rex stare at the television until the electricity goes off and they must find something else to do.

Teddy's TV Troubles

by Joanne Cantor, PhD Reading level: Ages 4-8 "Teddy's TV Troubles" is a children's story book that helps parents and children cope with the scary things that they see on television. Teddy Bear is lucky! Although he has been frightened by something he saw on TV, his mother knows just what to do. Together they soothe his fears through a series of calming, fun-filled activities. "Teddy's TV Troubles" is a story book, an activity book, and a going-to-bed book all rolled into one!

Too Much TV

by Stan & Jan Berenstain Reading level: Ages 4-8 Concerned that the family is spending too much time in front of the television and neglecting other activities, Mama Bear decides that there will be no television watching for one week.

When the TV Broke

by Harriet Ziefert Reading level: Ages 4-8 The story deals with what a little boy does when the family television breaks and has to be taken to the shop. At first he is absolutely lost since he spends his entire life in front of the TV, seven days a week. He keeps asking his mother, over and over, if it is fixed yet. Slowly, however, he starts doing other things. He cooks, reads books, and then finally uses his imagination to create an entire world for himself. He hardly notices when his father brings the TV back.

_____Series Spotlight_____

BETWEEN THE LIONS airs Monday-Friday at 2:30 p.m..

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_____

This following feature was adapted from “Springtime Fun” from PBS Teachers:
Stacey Colino:

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/parents/solutions/information/article.php?contentId=107307>

Springtime Fun

Spring is a great time to head outdoors to explore nature, and we can learn a lot from nature. We can learn about animals, plants, insects, and the earth to name just a few things. We can also practice science and math skills such as classifying and counting. Try some of the following activities to help children learn more about spring. Use the provided questions to spark a discussion.

Outdoors

- * Take a nature walk with the children. Look, listen, and notice the things around you. What does the air smell like? Do you see any animals? What about baby animals? What sounds do you hear?
- * Find books about insects at the library. Look at the pictures together. Do you see any insects that look familiar? Can you and the children find any of them in outside near the home or center? Do they have spots or stripes? Does the insect fly or walk? How do you know?
- * Look for flowers outside. Then locate a flower book and look up what type of flower you found. Can you identify it? How many petals does it have? How many leaves? Does it smell nice?
- * Lie on a blanket and stare up at the clouds. Do the cloud shapes look like anything else? Sometimes you can see animal shapes, castles, or your favorite food.

NOTE: Most of the time you will only want to look at the animals, insects, and flowers. Only touch them if you know they are safe.

Indoors

- * Sing a song or write a poem about spring. Some famous sayings about spring are
 April showers bring May flowers
 March goes in like a lion and out like a lamb.
What do these sayings mean? What other famous sayings about spring do you know?
- * Learn about spring holidays. Do you know about Mother’s Day or Cinco de Mayo? What other holidays happen during the spring?
- * Draw or paint a picture of your favorite thing about spring.

_____Another April Feature_____

Children’s Questions about Animals from PBS Parents:

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/experts/archive/kratts-animalquestions.html>

Stumped by the questions your kids ask about animals? Chris and Martin Kratt, creators of Kratts’ Creatures and Zoboofoo, wanted to know what kids asked about animals and answered their questions.

Beth from Ithaca, NY, writes:

We’ve heard that touching a butterfly’s wings can prevent the butterfly from being able to fly. If that’s true, why?

Also, do the same monarchs make the trip to Mexico and back to the US in a year, or is it their offspring coming back?

Dear Beth,

Butterfly wings are very fragile. They can tear very easily and they have tiny scales on them that flake off when you touch them (even if you touch them gently). The scales do help the butterfly fly so it is best not to touch them.

Monarch butterflies have a complex life cycle that is tied in with their migration. The butterflies that migrate south hibernate in Mexico for four to five months. When they awaken, they start heading north, but lay eggs and die before completing the journey way up north. There are 3 more generations of butterflies (these generations only last two to six weeks!) during the spring and summer months. Then the long-lived, migrating generation is born and begins the cycle again, heading south for Mexico!

Sandy from Dallas, TX, asks:
How old can turtles grow up to be?

Dear Sandy,
Galapagos tortoises and Aldabra tortoises are two of the longest living types of tortoise. They can live to be well over 100 years old in the wild. Some zoos estimate their tortoises as living anywhere from 160 to 250 years! You can look in your history books and find out what was happening in the world when these tortoises were born! There was no TV, no computers - the world was a much different place!

Chris from Arlington, VA, asks:
Why do centipedes have so many legs?

Dear Chris,
Centipedes don't always have a hundred legs like many people think. Different species (and different ages) of centipedes have different numbers of legs – anywhere from 14 to over 350 legs! A centipede's body is made of many segments and each segment has a pair of legs. With a pair of legs for each segment of it's body, a centipede is able to move very well over uneven ground – over rocks, down crevices, and more!

Ellen from Lorton, VA, asks:
Why do household cats usually not like water?

Dear Ellen,
Pet and farm animals are “domesticated” from wild animals. That means that a long, long time ago people got a wild animal and started living with it. Eventually the animal and people got used to living together and, after a long time, the wild animal started looking like the “domesticated” animals we know today. So, while some wild cats do like the water (like jaguars and tigers), many others don't. The wild cat that was “domesticated” by people probably didn't like the water very much and the pet cats that came from it still don't like the water!

Dugan from Hartford, CT, asks:
Is there a creature in the sea that eats whales?

Dear Dugan,
Orcas (Killer Whales) travel in pods, or groups, and they often work together when hunting. Orcas have been seen attacking blue whales and gray whales!! Also, polar bears sometimes catch a small type of whale, the beluga whale, and haul them out of the water to eat them.

Isaac from Norway, NY, asks:
Why do elephants have big ears?

Dear Isaac,
An elephant's big ears don't just help the elephant hear, they also help the elephant keep cool in the heat of Africa. An elephant's ears have lots of blood vessels, so when the elephant flaps his ears it cools the blood. That helps keep the whole elephant cooler!! It's like a built in cooling system!

Xiachang from Kansas City, KS, asks:

Is there a limit to the kinds and numbers of fish that can live in a fish tank together?

Dear Xiachang,

Yes. Some types of fish shouldn't be kept in the same tank together – they might eat each other! Also, you want to have a good balance between the number of fish in your tank and the size of the tank. A safe rule of thumb is one inch of fish for every gallon of water. You may be able to have more than that, but it all depends on the type of fish and type of aquarium setup you have. Ask the aquarist at your fish/pet store to help you figure out what is best for your types of fish.

Heaven from Bowling Green, KY, asks:

If a shark and a whale got in a fight, would a whale win?

Dear Heaven,

Sharks and whales probably don't fight very often. Both are big, tough predators that could inflict damage on the other, so it's not worth fighting for either of them. But orcas (killer whales) have been observed attacking and killing Great White Sharks. One wildlife filmmaker observed an orca biting a small Great White Shark in half!

Zoe from San Francisco, CA, asks:

Do octopuses really come from eggs? Also, how big does an octopus get?

Dear Zoe,

Yes, octopuses do come from eggs. The eggs of the common octopus look like bunches of small, blackish grapes. The largest octopuses found (and confirmed) have been around 12 feet long from the top of the head to the tip of the tentacles. Squids, a relative of the octopus, can grow even bigger! The Giant Squid can be over 60 feet long!!

Tessa from Othello, WA, asks:

Why do dogs chase cats?

Dear Tessa,

Both pet dogs and wild dogs (like wolves and foxes) have a built-in hunting instinct. That's why they chase other animals, like cats. But in Africa, where large cats like lions and leopards live, the situation can be reversed. Lions will chase African wild dogs (the "wolves" of Africa) and try to catch them. There, it's the large cats that chase the smaller dogs!!

Tessa from Othello, WA, asks:

Why do frogs have so many eggs?

Dear Tessa,

Human parents take care of their babies for many years, making sure their kids are safe and healthy. But most frogs take a different approach to parenting. They lay a LOT of eggs and then leave them. The baby frogs hatch and grow up on their own. There are lots of predators that eat frog eggs and young frogs, so it's not easy for a young frog to make it. But the mother frog has laid many eggs, so chances are good that some of the babies will grow up big and strong.

Suzanne from Gainesville, GA, asks:

Why do baboons have red faces?

Dear Suzanne,

Baboons live in groups, so being able to communicate (or "talk" to one another) is very important. Most scientists believe the red (and sometimes multi-colored) faces help the baboons communicate. Their red colors say to other

baboons in the group "Look at me. I am healthy and strong". Also, colors on the faces can help baboons talk to each other with facial expressions. Baboons make lots of different facial expressions that mean things like "I'm angry" or "I'm scared." The bright colors of a baboon's face help these expressions stand out and be more obvious to other baboons. You can think of it like this: If you were going to make a sign that you wanted everyone to see, would you use bright colors or dull colors?

Daniel from Nashville, TN, asks:

How can you tell the difference between an alligator and a crocodile?

Dear Daniel,

The best way to tell the difference is by looking at the snout. An alligator has a rounder snout and a crocodile has a more pointy snout. Also, an alligator's teeth are more inside his mouth – he has pits on the roof of his mouth that many of the teeth fit into when his mouth is closed. A crocodile's teeth, on the other hand, are easy to see right on the edge of her mouth, even when her mouth is closed! You could say the crocodile has the toothier grin!

Christian from Cassville, WV, writes:

What colors do animals see in?

Dear Christian,

This has been very hard for scientists to figure out -- and many are still working on it. Different animals see in different colors. For example, worms have eye spots that can only see in "dark" or "light" - they can't really see colors at all. And scientists believe that some monkeys can't see the color red very well. Other animals can see colors that we can't! Rattlesnakes have special sensors that can "see" infrared light, a special type of light that is given off by hot things (like the warm bodies of their prey).

Brittany from Herington, KS, writes:

Do fish ever run out of energy to swim? If so, what do they do?

Dear Brittany,

Fish do get tired of swimming sometimes. And when a fish gets tired, she will stop and rest -- a lot like we do when we're tired of walking. But a fish doesn't sleep like we do. Instead, most fish go into an intense resting state -- when the fish is still aware of what is happening around him, but his body is getting all the rest it needs to start swimming again!

Brittany from Herington, KS, writes:

Why do cats purr?

Dear Brittany,

Cats are the only type of animal that purrs. Nobody knows exactly what cat purring means, but we do know that cats usually purr when they are content -- like when someone is petting her cat or when a mother cat is feeding its kitten. But it's not quite that simple - cats will also purr when they are upset or afraid or even when they are about to be fed. Some cat experts think that purring is a way of communicating to others "I'm not mean, don't worry about me - let's just be happy." In other words, it sort of shows their "peaceful intentions." If only we could talk to our cats and find out exactly why they do it! Great question!

Jennifer from Charlottesville, VA, writes:

What do flies eat?

Dear Jennifer,

There are thousands of different kinds of flies. And different flies eat different things -- like fruit, other insects, nectar, sap, pollen, and even decaying things. Houseflies like to eat just about anything that we eat -- from bologna sandwiches to bananas. A fly can't chew, so when it lands on it's food, it vomits up digestive juices from its stomach. When the digestive juices make the food a little bit mushy, the fly sucks the mushy part up with its straw-like sucking mouthparts! Strange...but true!

Chris from Kenosha, WI, writes:

One of my students asked me a question I couldn't answer: If a person is allergic to housecats, would he be allergic to lions and tigers, too? I thought that was a pretty good question for a little guy in first grade!

Dear Chris,

Yes, chances are that if you're allergic to housecats, you would also be allergic to lions, tigers, and other wildcats. Fortunately, lions and tigers don't make good pets -- having one in your house would cause much bigger problems than allergies! Like ripping up the couch, knocking over the refrigerator and catching the neighbor's dog!

Anje from San Antonio, TX, asks:

Are parrots the only animals that can talk?

Dear Anje,

Parrots are great at imitating human words, especially the African Grey Parrot and the Green Parrot. But other birds can do it too -- some better than others. Mynahs, crows, magpies, ravens, jackdaws, and even bluejays have all been trained by people to say at least a few words.

But the human language is just one kind of language. Almost all animals "talk" to each other in one way or another -- in their own types of languages. When you hear frogs croaking, squirrels chattering, and elephants trumpeting -- they're talking! Some animals, like leopards, even talk to each other with smells -- they spray their scent on their territory boundaries to say "This place is mine. Keep out!". And dolphins have a whole series of clicks and whistles that they use to communicate with one another. We're still trying to decipher what all the sounds mean, but scientists now believe that dolphins may use a special sound when referring to themselves -- like an actual "name"!

_____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:

* Books of the Month: Field Trips

* Kathleen Krull: An Exclusive New Video Interview

*RESEARCH AND NEWS

* Why Do Teachers Leave?

* Reading Fluency Module

* READING RAINBOW Young Writers & Illustrators Contest

* American Library Association (ALA) Announces Literacy Award Winners

* IDEAS FOR PARENTS

* Reading 101: Sounds of Speech

* Wild & Wacky Mad Lib from National Geographic

* Do Your Kids Love Animals?

* Teacher Appreciation

*IDEAS FOR EDUCATORS

* Meet the Word Families

* Find a Word Literacy Activity

* Stumped for the Title of a Favorite Book? Try Stumping the Bookseller!

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_____

Child Development: Environment

Children are born curious about the world around them. Everything is new and interesting to them. What can adults do to help them develop this natural curiosity into an appreciation of the beauty of the world around them and an understanding of what they can do to take care of it? We should not expect young children to think they must “save” planet Earth but we can begin to lay the groundwork.

Young children learn best through hands-on experiences. So, take them outside and talk about plants, litter and the weather. From the time they are born, children use their five senses to gather information about the world. Invite them to see, feel, smell, touch and listen to nature. Let them take care of plants and other living things. Talk about what you can do to keep the air, water and earth clean. Use only what you need. For example, talk about drawing on both sides of the paper and turning off the water faucet when you are finished using it. Plant flowers, grass and vegetables. Pick up trash. Do these activities together and have fun!

Did you know? Between 2-3 years of age, children begin to identify some plants and animals. They may start to understand that pets need food and plants need water to live. By 3-4 years of age, they can identify basic characteristics of plants and animal such as their color, shape, and size.

Resources used:

* PBS Parents Guide to Child Development: Science. <http://www.pbs.org/parents/childdevelopment/>

* Woyke, P. “Hopping Frogs and Trail Walks: Connecting Young Children and Nature,” *Young Children*, January 2004.

_____Family Involvement Tip of the Month_____

What You Can Do At Home from <http://www.colorincolorado.org>

Sing, talk, read, and encourage your child every day!

When children are young, they learn by listening and talking with their parents, relatives, babysitters, and others.

If you and your child are more comfortable with Spanish, then sing, talk, and read with your child in Spanish. This will build your child's speaking, listening, and understanding skills. These skills will later help him or her speak and read English.

The gift of two languages

Knowing two languages is a gift you can give your child. Many children lose the ability to speak and read in Spanish when growing up in the United States. With encouragement from you, though, your child can become fluent in not just one language, but two!

As your child gets older...

Once your child goes to school, you still have a great influence on how well he or she will do. For example, you can:

- * encourage learning at home
- * keep track to make sure your child is not getting behind
- * learn the many ways to help your child by talking with his or her teacher
- * understand what to do if your child needs extra help

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