

Welcome to the November 2005 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 November 2005

_____Contents_____

The Learning Triangle

- * How do you use the RTL Learning Triangle? Monthly Contest
- * ABC's Theme Learning Triangle
- * Food Theme Learning Triangle

IPTV Kids Schedule for Fall 2005

Program Schedule, Episode Descriptions and Record Rights for PBS Kids Programs

November Focus on Media Literacy: Advertising and Preschoolers: Ideas for Parents and Caregivers from PBS Parents

Series Spotlight: JAKERS! THE ADVENTURES OF PIGGLEY WINKS

November Feature:

A Look at the Research on Readiness for School

Tip of the Month: Thanks for Friends and Family – PBS KIDS Special Event – Thanksgiving Day (11/24/05)

Resources for November

Subscribe/Unsubscribe

_____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/triangleabc1105.pdf>

In Spanish: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/triangleabc1105spanish.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 noon.

SESAME STREET – Every episode features a letter of the day. (Notice how often the show shows the letter on the screen while you hear its spoken sound. Then it relates the letter 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. and 2:30 p.m.

* Sundays at 8 a.m.

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.

_____Food Theme Learning Triangle_____

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

In English: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/trianglefood1105.pdf>

In Spanish: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/trianglefood1105spanish.pdf>

Children's first experiences with food are part of their connection with being cared for and loved by another person. Often those feelings continue, and the giving and receiving of food is associated with giving and receiving love. As children grow they also learn they like some foods and not others. Children often make choices when offered food. These choices involve likes and dislikes. Parents can expand their children's experiences with food, particularly learning healthy alternatives to junk food. Food excites all the senses – you can see it, smell it, touch it, taste it, and sometimes even hear it.

READ IT

1. Pizza Party by Grace MacCarone (This book is also available in Spanish.)—A group of children have fun making a pizza. (Ages 4-8)
2. D.W., the Picky Eater by Mark Brown—Because her eating habits cause some problems, Arthur the aardvark's younger sister has to stay home when her family eats out. (Ages 4-8)

3. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (This book is also available in Spanish.)—Follows the progress of a hungry little caterpillar as he eats his way through a varied and very large quantity of food until, full at last, he forms a cocoon around himself and goes to sleep. Die-cut pages illustrate what the caterpillar ate on successive days. (Infant - Preschool)

4. *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* by Lauren Child—A fussy eater decides to sample the carrots after her brother convinces her that they are really orange twiglets from Jupiter. (Ages 4-8)

5. *Pancakes for Breakfast* by Tomie dePaola (This is a wordless book.)—A little old lady's attempts to have pancakes for breakfast are hindered by a scarcity of supplies and the participation of her pets. (Infant - Preschool)

VIEW IT

CAILLOU – Caillou Cooks #107

* Wednesday, November 9, 2005 at 8:30 a.m.

Caillou is making a mess in the kitchen! It seems real cooking is a bit too difficult so instead he and Sarah make up some of their own recipes, mud pizza and leaf salad. Once he cleans up his own mess Caillou helps his mommy bake cookies. He even gets up early and makes surprise breakfast for his parents.

READING RAINBOW – Bread is for Eating #1203

* Monday, November 21, 2005 at 12:30 p.m.

This episode focuses on the art of baking bread and its cultural value throughout the world. Bread is considered to be the most basic food that we consume. It can be fun to make, tasty, and is needed for a balanced daily diet. However, as learned throughout this episode, the making and consumption of bread takes on an even larger meaning for many.

DO IT

1. Distinguish healthy foods from junk. Materials: glue, marker, pictures of food (from magazines, grocery fliers, etc.), poster board (two large pieces)

* Prepare: Collect pictures of healthy foods and junk foods from magazines, fliers, newspapers, etc. On one piece of poster board, write the title "Healthy Food" and draw a green traffic light. On the other piece of poster board, write the title "Junk Food" and draw a yellow traffic light.

* Sort healthy: Point to the green traffic light and ask: What does a green light mean? (Go ahead.) Kids should feel free to go ahead and eat lots of healthy foods. Help children choose and glue down two or three pictures of healthy foods onto this poster.

* Sort junk: Point to the yellow traffic light and ask: What does a yellow light mean? (Slow down, and prepare to stop.) Explain that we should only eat junk food once in a while, if at all. Help children choose and glue down two or three pictures of junk food onto this poster (e.g., candy, chips, soda).

* Continue to sort: Keep sorting food pictures while you discuss healthy eating habits. Ask questions such as: Ask: What sorts of things should we eat? How can we keep our bodies strong?

2. Children enjoy helping in the kitchen and often are more willing to eat foods they help prepare. Involve children in planning and preparing some meals and snacks for the family. It is important that you give kitchen tasks appropriate for your child's age. Be patient as your child gains new skills at different ages. Expect a few spills. It's a small price to pay for helping your child become comfortable around food. This is also a great time to take the opportunity to talk with your child.

_____IPTV Kids Schedule for Fall 2005_____

A print version of the IPTV Kids Schedule for Fall 2005 in English and Spanish can be found at the following location:

<http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/Fall2005KidsSchedule.pdf>

This fall, 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.	Barney & Friends
10:30 a.m.	The Berenstain Bears
11:00 a.m.	The Big Comfy Couch
11:30 a.m.	Cyberchase
Noon	Between the Lions
12:30 p.m.	Reading Rainbow
1:00 p.m.	Brian Jacques' Redwall (ends Sept. 16) Jakers! The Adventures of Piggley Winks (begins Sept. 19)
1:30 p.m.	Zaboomafoo
2:00 p.m.	Thomas & Friends/Bob the Builder
2:30 p.m.	Sesame Street
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)
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 you are interested in 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.

_____November Focus on Media Literacy_____

Advertising and Preschoolers: Ideas for Parents and Caregivers from PBS Parents

More and more often, products are made and stores are designed specifically to appeal to kids. Try as you might, you can't keep children from seeing advertisements and products—but you can decrease their influence.

The goal is to get children in the habit of thinking about what he/she is asking for rather than immediately demanding what he sees. This is no easy task. It will demand a good deal of patience and creative thinking on your part. But there is good news: Breaking the habit of "needing" something right away gets easier as children age.

5 Ways to Fight Advertising

1. Mute or talk back to TV ads.

As a way to teach a child that he/she can question what he/she sees, ask questions and make comments yourself: How would you like to make something like that ourselves? That doesn't look like something we do when we go to the park. That looks like it will break.

2. Turn in-store requests into art projects.

You might say: We don't have to buy a card for Grandma because we can make one of our own with glitter. I bet we can use food coloring to create some cool holiday cookies at home.

3. Before you enter a store, let a child know what he/she can and cannot have.

A quick reminder beforehand helps manage your child's expectations: We're here just to grab a few groceries and nothing extra.

4. Read product labels with children.

Preschool children will not be able to make out the words—you may stumble over some yourself—but get children in the habit of asking questions about products: What's this made of? What do we know about this food that the commercial didn't tell us?

5. Keep a running list for special requests.

When a child seems determined to have something, ask: Should we put that on your birthday wish list?

_____Series Spotlight_____

JAKERS! THE ADVENTURES OF PIGGLEY WINKS airs on Iowa Public Television weekdays at 1:00 p.m.

For children ages 3-6.

JAKERS! THE ADVENTURES OF PIGGLEY WINKS follows the adventures of Piggley Winks, a spunky eight-year-old pig, and his friends Dannan the Duck and Ferny the Bull on Raloo Farm in 1950s Ireland. The tops and tales (beginning and end) of each episode feature Piggley in the present day as a grandfather, telling stories of his childhood shenanigans to his three very contemporary city-dwelling grandpigs.

MEET THE CHARACTERS

Piggley Winks – This spirited eight-year-old pig is the unofficial leader of the youngsters in and around the village of Tara. He's spunky, creative, imaginative rascal, with a streak of mischief running through his veins. His favorite activity is going on adventures (don't ask him to site still!) with his two best friends, Dannan the Duck and Ferny the Bull.

Ferny Toro's enthusiasm and his deep admiration for Piggley make him a loyal eager, trustworthy, and devoted friend. He is innocent, strong, loyal, fun-loving eight-year-old, who is cautious but curious. He likes speaking Spanish with his dad, Don Toro, and enjoys making up his own songs.

Dannan O'Mallard is one sensible and down-to-earth duck. However, when push comes to shove, she will bravely rush to assist her friends.

Molly Winks is Piggley's independent, plucky, adorable five-year-old sister. Molly is always ready at a moment's notice to get in there and play with the big kids.

WHAT JAKERS! TEACHES

JAKERS! teaches children to harness the power of imagination-

- * helping children consider inventive and constructive solutions to everyday situations;
- * helping to develop children's social skills;
- * fostering intergenerational communication; and
- * promoting the international tradition of sharing life lessons through storytelling.

Episodes emphasize responsibility, honesty, respect for feelings and property, good citizenship, friendship, cooperation, self-esteem, and other important social skills.

IDEAS FOR WATCHING JAKERS! WITH YOUR CHILD

- Ask the child(ren) what they think will happen next.
- Ask the child(ren) to tell you the name of their favorite character from the show and why that character is their favorite.
- Encourage the child(ren) to sing and dance along to the music.
- Try turning off the sound and see what the child(ren) can learn from the show without the audio cues.
- Try covering the TV screen and see what the child(ren) can learn from the show without visual cues.
- After watching, ask the child(ren) to tell you what they saw and heard during the program. How would they have solved a problem the characters encountered?
- Help the child(ren) pick out related books, and/or play a related game.

Visit the JAKERS! Web site at <http://pbskids.org/jakers/> for fun games, stories, music, art and other activities.

_____November Feature_____

A Look at the Research on Readiness for School

Recently, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory's National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools published a synthesis of the research on children's readiness for school. The authors noted that the term readiness as it relates to schools, families, and communities is a broad concept with a variety of definitions.

Key Findings:

The authors reviewed forty-eight studies on children's readiness for school that had been conducted since 1998 and met their research standards. These are the key findings from those studies:

1. Young children enter kindergarten with a range of cognitive and social skills that appear to make a difference in their achievement during the kindergarten year. This seems to be of long-term importance; children who get off to a good start in kindergarten tend to maintain that advantage as they progress through school.
2. Young children's home environment—including both family background factors and interactions between children and other family members—is strongly associated with their relative skills and abilities upon entry to kindergarten. Other significant correlations exist, as well, including participation in early child care and education.
3. Early child care and education programs that include family components can boost children's educational success, both short-term and long-term. However, the impact of specific features of such programs, including family components, remain largely untested and unknown. In addition, significant issues of cost, quality, and context complicate this finding.
4. Specific strategies for helping parents support their young children's emerging literacy and numeracy skills can produce gains among children from both low- and middle-income families. However, the research base is limited to only a handful of strategies.
5. Families and teachers tend to have somewhat different perceptions about what matters most in children's readiness for kindergarten. The impact of these different perceptions, if any, on children's readiness and their kindergarten achievement has not been documented.
6. Although families of all types of backgrounds are often involved in their children's preschool educational or child care programs, their involvement tends to decline when the children enter kindergarten. Both the types and frequency of family-school contact tend to change from preschool to kindergarten.
7. Although a growing body of research describes schools' transition practices, little to no research assesses the effectiveness of specific school supports for children's transition to kindergarten. Descriptions of transition practices

and barriers indicate that the most individualized, relationship-building activities tend to be the least used and that differences in transition practices are associated with school characteristics.

Recommendations for Strengthening Local Policy and Practice:

1: Provide children with early educational experiences.

Perhaps the strongest conclusion that can be drawn from this research base is that early education for children—including programs for children in poverty who are most seriously at risk for school failure—can make a difference when those children reach kindergarten and beyond. Yet, a significant minority of children still lack ready access to early education.

2: Help families provide learning resources and experiences for their young children.

Parent-training strategies that are targeted specifically to strengthen young children's pre-academic skills have shown good promise in terms of both early literacy and early mathematics skills.

3: Work to ensure fidelity in implementing model interventions.

Ensuring that model strategies are actually implemented as intended is a key, but often overlooked, factor in the effectiveness of interventions.

4: Build kindergarten teachers' awareness of the long-term impacts of differences in children's pre-academic skills when they enter school.

Studies suggest that many kindergarten teachers tend to downplay the importance of children's pre-academic skills at kindergarten entry, emphasizing instead social-emotional traits and capabilities. However, children's earliest school performance, including their early kindergarten performance, generally sets a pattern for their future success or lack of it.

5: Encourage families to maintain their contact and involvement as their children move from child care or preschool environments to kindergarten.

No matter what their backgrounds are or how involved they are in their children's preschool or early care settings, parents' at-school involvement diminishes when their children start kindergarten. The consistency of this pattern suggests that schools must take the initiative to alter families' perceptions of the roles and levels of involvement expected of them.

6: Provide a variety of supports to help ease children's transition to kindergarten.

Schools can take specific steps to increase teachers' use of in-depth transition activities, including providing training, providing supplemental funds for teachers' transition-related activities during the summer, and providing teachers with class lists as early as possible before the start of school. Particularly in urban schools and schools with substantial populations of low-income and racial or ethnic minority students, school administrators need to emphasize transition activities as a priority and to provide the necessary supports for kindergarten teachers.

For more information on this research synthesis or to download a copy visit: www.sedl/connections.

(Source NCPIE Update, October, 2005 and Readiness, School, Family, & Community Connections, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory website, Lacy Wood Readiness: School Family, and Community Connections presentation slides September 2005;)

_____Tip of the Month_____

Thanks for Friends and Family – PBS KIDS Special Event – Thanksgiving Day (11/24/05)

On Thanksgiving Day, PBS KIDS will present a two-hour special block of programs featuring ARTHUR and POSTCARDS FROM BUSTER called "Thanks for Friends and Family," all about food, family, and fun. The special will follow a story arc of Buster leaving town to be with his father, traveling with his father, and returning to Arthur and friends in Elwood City. Then on Friday, November 25, tune in to "Big Big Friend Day" a special featuring DRAGON TALES and CLIFFORD, and make sure to catch the sneak peaks a the newest PBS KIDS program, IT'S A BIG, BIG WORLD premiering January 2, 2006.

_____Resources for November_____

Sesame Workshop's View & Do Newsletter—This monthly publication gives episode descriptions and activity tips for SESAME STREET and DRAGON TALES. Use it to select episodes from these programs, or parts of episodes, that you want to use during the VIEW section of the RTL Learning Triangle or when you need ideas for activities.

* English: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/ViewNov05Eng.pdf>

* Spanish: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/ViewNov05Spa.pdf>

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:

- * October is "Kid Check-In" Month!
- * Books of the Month: Tall Tales
- * Target the Problem! A Free New Tool
- * Jerry Pinkney: An Exclusive Video Interview
- * "Differentiated Reading Instruction" on November 2

RESEARCH AND NEWS

- * Nation's Report Card on Reading: 2005 Results Are In
- * Family Involvement Resources
- * Paraprofessionals and NCLB
- * SRCDC Suggests Coordinated Approach to Learning for Ages 3-8

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

- * My Child is Falling Behind: Finding Help
- * PBS Stop and Go: A Writing Activity
- * Hollywood and Reading: "In Her Shoes" and "The Reading Room"

IDEAS FOR EDUCATORS

- * 103 Things to Do Before/During/After Reading
- * Student Progress Monitoring: Reviews
- * Spooky Animated Stories from Thinkport
- * DonorsChoose.org and Teachers' Wish Lists
- * PBS Show: "Hobart Shakespearians"

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:

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.

www.fci.org/madfeelings/default.asp

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