

Welcome to the September 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 September 2005

### \_\_\_\_\_Contents\_\_\_\_\_

#### The Learning Triangle

- \* How do you use the RTL Learning Triangle? Monthly Contest
- \* Animals Theme Learning Triangle
- \* School Theme Learning Triangle

#### IPTV Kids Schedule for Fall 2005

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

#### FREE ICN Opportunities

- \* FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS
- \* FOR CHILDREN

#### September Focus on Media Literacy: Stereotypes (from the PBS Parents Guide to Children and Media)

#### Series Spotlight: ZOBOOMAFO

#### September Feature

- \* Learning and Teaching in Preschool

#### Tip of the Month: New! FREE Resources for Teachers of Latino ELL Students (from Reading Rockets)

#### Resources for September: Parent Connections (from PBS TeacherSource)

#### 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](mailto: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.

### \_\_\_\_\_Animals Theme Learning Triangle\_\_\_\_\_

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

In English: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/triangleanimals905.pdf>

In Spanish: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/triangleanimals905spanish.pdf>

Animals, especially pets, can play important roles in children's early years. They can be trustworthy listeners for a child's secrets and feelings of loneliness, fear, or joy. By helping to take care of animals, children learn responsibility, caring and discipline, and that all living creatures need to be treated with consideration.

#### READ IT

1. Clifford the Big Red Dog by Norman Bridwell—Emily Elizabeth describes the activities she enjoys with her very big, very red dog and how they take care of each other. (This book is also available in Spanish) (Infant-Preschool)
2. From Head to Toe by Eric Carle—Encourages the reader to exercise by following the movements of various animals; presented in a question and answer format. (Ages 4-8)
3. Perro Grande...Perro Pequeno/Big Dog...Little Dog by P.D. Eastman Two dogs are opposite in every way, but are the very best of friends. (This book is bilingual in English and Spanish) (Ages 4-8)

#### VIEW IT

ZOBOOMAFOO – This series features the Kratt brothers and lots of animals in every episode.

\* Weekdays at 1:30 p.m.

CAILLOU– Nature #123

\* Thursday, September 8, 2005 at 8:30 a.m.

All of Caillou's furry friends are getting back to nature. Gilbert is a flower detective, Rexie is a famed jungle hunter and Teddy is helping Caillou's mommy harvest her bean plants. Grandma takes Caillou bird-watching. Caillou's class goes on a treasure hunt in the forest and Caillou finds a turtle.

BERENSTAIN BEARS – Trouble with Pets #109a

\* Tuesday, September 27, 2005 at 10:30 p.m.

Brother and Sister adopt one of Farmer Ben's new puppies and soon discover that having a pet is a big responsibility. When the two pet owners leave to play with friends, the puppy stays behind and destroys the living room. As a result, the puppy is banished to the backyard. Brother and Sister apologize for neglecting their duties and Mama and Papa decide to give the cubs and the puppy a second chance.

#### DO IT

1. Reinvent "Follow the Leader" by doing an "Animal Walk" in which the leader imitates animals. Consider using different categories of animals, such as zoo animals, farm animals, or animals in the wild.
2. Cut pictures of animals out of magazines to make a collage. Label the animals or have the child do it. Talk about where the animals live, their likenesses and differences, etc.
3. Draw a pet picture. Have the child draw a picture of a pet that he/she would like to have someday. As the child describes the pet to you, print his/her words on the picture. Ask questions to prompt discussion. "Where would the pet live? What would you feed it?"
4. Ask children to describe their pet or a pet that they would like to have at home. Encourage them to imitate pet sounds and movements.
5. Identify pet characteristics by using picture clues. Example: A cat meows; a dog \_\_\_\_\_. A cat has paws; a fish has \_\_\_\_\_. This is a fun way for children to identify animals while also discovering the world of common and not so common pets!
6. Play Pretend Veterinarian - Help the child gather several stuffed animals. Pretend you are a pet owner with a sick or injured pet. The child can examine and treat your pet. Additional props that make the pretend play more fun include a bathroom scale, a stethoscope, adhesive bandages and a dog leash.

\_\_\_\_\_ School Theme Learning Triangle \_\_\_\_\_

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

In English: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/triangleschool905.pdf>

In Spanish: <http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/documents/triangleschool905spanish.pdf>

While children are excited to go to kindergarten or preschool because it shows they are growing up, the change of routine, a new place and strange people can make this new experience a little scary. Sometimes children start acting like they did when they were younger: sucking their thumbs, clinging more to parents, needing more attention. Parents can help children by telling them stories of their first days at school, providing opportunities to talk with

children about their excited or scared feelings and reading books about school experiences. Children should know what a day at school will be like and what others felt about their first days at school.

#### READ IT

1. School Bus by Donald Crews—Follows the progress of school buses as they take children to school and bring them home again. (Infant-Preschool)
2. Class Picture Day by Andrea Buckless—The only student to stick her tongue out in the class picture has to figure out how to fix this terrible mistake. (Ages 4-8)

#### VIEW IT

CLIFFORD'S PUPPY DAYS – School Daze #204b

\* Thursday, September 15, 2005 at 7:30 a.m. & 4 p.m.

\* Friday, September 16, 2005 at 8:30 a.m.

As the kids go off for their first day of school, the gang decides it would be fun to have their own school, too. There's just one problem. While they seem to have five qualified teachers, they only have one willing pupil-Clifford. When an overworked Clifford is too tired to play with Emily Elizabeth after school, the gang realizes how unfair they've been, and set up school in a more equitable way.

THE BERENSTAIN BEARS – Go to School #108a

\* Monday, September 26, 2005 at 10:30 a.m.

Too-Tall and the gang amuse themselves at Sister's expense by warning her how hard third grade will be and how strict Teacher Jane is. Brother tries unsuccessfully to convince Sister not to worry. Mama reminisces about Sister starting kindergarten and reflects on how her daughter's feelings back then were exactly the same. Sure enough, when Sister starts grade three she enjoys the new experience just like she did when she started kindergarten.

#### DO IT

1. Line up chairs or boxes in rows and play "school bus." A driver's chair can be set up with a plate serving as the steering wheel. Pretend to wait for the bus, get on the bus, ride to school, be at school (rearrange the chairs!), ride home, meet a parent or caregiver as they come home.

2. Explain to children what will happen the first day of school: "First, we will get up and get dressed. Then, we will have breakfast and I will walk with you to school." Explain to children what they will learn at school by doing activities like these:

\* Sort playing cards by number, color, and shape.

\* Read a book magazine and point out letters and words. Do the same when you see business or street signs ("That word is McDonald's.")

Each time you do these activities, tell children that these are some of the things they will learn about at school.

3. Talk with your children. Every day, ask them questions about school. For example, ask:

\* What did you do today?

\* What did you learn today?

\* What made you feel good today at school?

\* What are you going to do tomorrow at school that will be fun?

Encourage your children to give you more than one word answers!

\_\_\_\_\_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/growups/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](http://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](http://www.iptv.org) are updated by the 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

\_\_\_\_\_FREE ICN Opportunities\_\_\_\_\_

FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Stories & More: Information Session

[http://www3.iptv.org/iowa\\_database/event-detail.cfm?ID=6214](http://www3.iptv.org/iowa_database/event-detail.cfm?ID=6214)

Educators

September 6, 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Registration Deadline: 09/01/05

September 8, 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Registration Deadline: 09/02/05

During the fall semester, Iowa Public Television (IPTV) and the State Library of Iowa are sponsoring a FREE series of four (4) ICN events called Stories & More featuring stories and activities that center on a monthly theme to institutions and programs that work directly with Iowa's preschool through first grade children.

About THIS Event

This is an information session for the adults that will be working with students during the Fall 2005 Stories and More ICN sessions for PK-1 students. We will discuss each theme, the activities that will be introduced, and the materials needed for students to participate fully in the activities. There will be plenty of time for your questions to be answered.

KinderNature: TREEmendously Fun

[http://www3.iptv.org/iowa\\_database/event-detail.cfm?ID=6103](http://www3.iptv.org/iowa_database/event-detail.cfm?ID=6103)

Educators

September 29, 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Registration Deadline: 09/23/05

This fall, KinderNature and Iowa Public Television are providing three ICN training sessions offering specific nature-themed activities. Each one-hour session includes a nature activity, song, art/craft, poem/song and snack, along with tips for going outdoors.

Information about THIS session:

Theme: Fall - toddlers and preschool age

Objectives: explore trees in the fall by way of physical, creative, and sensory activities.

Activities: Adopt a Tree, Whooo Lives in a Tree?, Leaves Big and Small, To Be A Tree, It's Raining Leaves, Tree Game, 1,2,3, Count the Trees, and Leaf Pile.

The KinderNature Web site provides environmental education activities for early childhood educators, preschools, day camps, parents, and parent/child programs. Topics on the web page include science, animals, play, music, art, earth sciences, math, reading, and teaching techniques. There will also be a short discussion on why it is important to teach environmental education/nature to children. Educational aids and child development information such as multiple intelligences, age appropriateness, Piaget theories, and links are also provided. No preparation prior to the session is needed.

Registrants receive the complimentary book, The Earth, a Hands-On Minds-On Science Early Childhood book published by Teacher Created Materials or alternate title while supplies last.

## FOR CHILDREN

Stories & More: Animals

[http://www3.iptv.org/iowa\\_database/event-detail.cfm?ID=5854](http://www3.iptv.org/iowa_database/event-detail.cfm?ID=5854)

Grades PK-1

September 13, 9:30 AM - 10:15 AM &

September 13, 10:30 AM - 11:15 AM

September 14, 9:30 AM - 10:15 AM &

September 14, 10:30 AM - 11:15 AM

Registration Deadline: 09/02/05

During the fall semester, Iowa Public Television (IPTV) and the State Library of Iowa are sponsoring a FREE series of four (4) ICN events called Stories & More featuring stories and activities that center on a monthly theme to institutions and programs that work directly with Iowa's preschool through first grade children.

About THIS Event

This 45-minute session features stories, poems, songs and activities all about animals. Several special guests from the Blank Park Zoo appear during the session as examples of different animal groups.

Following the ICN session, registrants receive a complimentary science book by mail.

Clifford's Big Ideas

[http://www3.iptv.org/iowa\\_database/event-detail.cfm?ID=5971](http://www3.iptv.org/iowa_database/event-detail.cfm?ID=5971)

Grades PK-1

September 21, 9:00 AM - 9:50 AM &

September 21, 10:00 AM - 10:50 AM &

September 21, 12:30 PM - 1:20 PM

Registration Deadline: 09/16/05

Clifford's Big Ideas are positive character traits modeled by the characters in the CLIFFORD TV series. In this ICN session, the book Clifford's Manners is read and students learn how to 'Be a Good Friend'. The session is filled with interactive activities fostering good character development as well as video clips from the television program. Following the ICN session, registrants receive a complimentary Clifford book.

## \_\_\_\_\_September Focus on Media Literacy\_\_\_\_\_

### Stereotypes (from the PBS Parents Guide to Children and Media)

TV, movies, videogames and the Internet often show people in an overly simple way, giving an inaccurate idea of what they are allowed to say and do and how important or unimportant they are. This often takes the form of stereotypes—recognizable but inaccurate views of one group of people by another. Some common stereotypes show women as weak and certain ethnic groups as lazy or scheming. Challenge children to question what they see and hear, so they develop an eye for sexism, racism, and other prejudices in mainstream media portrayals.

Ideally, children will come to realize that images on TV or in movies are not reality. Instead, they are the result of a producer's, a writer's or an actor's point of view. Whenever possible, encourage children to question limiting views of people and cultures by looking for more information.

#### 7 Ways to Fight Stereotypes

1. Talk to children about multiple cultures.

Be on the lookout for media that uses accents or skin colors to connect negative behavior with a certain cultural group. Are some cultures made out to be dumb? Unimportant? Aggressive? What does this reveal about our attitudes toward a given culture?

2. Help children identify gender stereotypes in media.

Point out differences in the ways males and females are shown in media. Ask why men are often the heroes, whereas women frequently play less important roles. What does it mean to "act like a man?" To "behave like a lady?" Who makes these decisions in each program? How do you think they make them?

3. Keep an eye out for stereotypes about age.

Use TV and movie characters to help children see that not only the young are capable and not only the old are wise. Teach children that elderly people are not always feeble or easily duped.

4. Talk to children about how they see themselves.

Find out what comparisons a child makes between his appearance or actions and those of a character. Talk to him about the difference between feeling good about himself and feeling superior to others. Encourage him to take pictures or write stories that express his individuality.

5. Introduce children to story characters - and real people - who take part in all kinds of activities.

Ask librarians, media specialists, friends and family to recommend books, TV shows, videos, and software programs that feature a variety of cultures or present men and women in nontraditional roles. Also seek out stories that show a wide range of body types, personal traits, and talents.

6. Teach children that images of beauty are often illusions.

A child may not realize how much work hair stylists, make-up artists, clothing designers and personal trainers do to make one person look like a star. She also may not know how easy it is to manipulate images to make models and actors look much better on the page or the screen than they do in person. Break the spell of TV shows and advertising by suggesting what goes on behind the scenes.

7. Speak out against stereotypes or absences in the media.

By pointing out negative portrayals based on race, gender or ability, you teach children not to accept inequity. They will begin to appreciate that characters don't have to be portrayed in a narrow way, and that many behaviors and roles have value. If possible, point out when representations of certain cultures or people are missing.

### \_\_\_\_\_Series Spotlight\_\_\_\_\_

ZOBOOMAFOO airs weekdays at 1:30 p.m. on IPTV.

#### Series Description:

ZOBOOMAFOO captures the imagination of preschoolers and encourages them to learn along with brothers Chris Kratt and Martin Kratt and the irrepressibly playful lemur Zoboo, as they explore the wondrous lives of creatures and the world in which we all live. Children are transported to a world where a lively mix of formats – including live-action outpost Animal Junction and the clay-animation imaginary world of Zooland – create a fun and energetic learning environment. Young viewers get their very first introduction to animals, where they live, what they eat, their proper names and, along with Zoboo, Chris and Martin, they make friends with animals.

#### Target Audience:

Preschoolers and their families

#### ZOBOOMAFOO Goals and Themes:

- \* Encourages children to understand animals that share our planet
- \* Provides young children with their very first introduction to wildlife
- \* Generates excitement and knowledge expansion in children through exploration of the world around them
- \* Knows that play + animals = learning!

#### How does this series help prepare children for school?

With its focus on the diversity of life in the world around us, ZOBOOMAFOO covers areas of social and emotional growth, as well as early experiences in the natural sciences. Through examples of animal play, socialization, and habitat creation and conservation, every episode shares animal facts and relates them back to the human world.

Be sure to visit the ZOBOOMAFOO Web site at <http://pbskids.org/zoboo/> for fun games, stories, music, art and other activities for families.

#### Ideas for Watching ZOBOOMAFOO 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.

### \_\_\_\_\_September Feature\_\_\_\_\_

Learning and Teaching in Preschool by Victoria R. Fu

“To take children seriously is to value them for who they are right now rather than seeing them as adults-in-the-making. Thus, what we ask them to do should have "horizontal relevance," . . . It ought to be "meaningful to them at the time" -- for example, related to something that could happen on the way home from school. Mere "vertical relevance" isn't enough: there's a reason to be concerned if the only justification for learning something is that students will need to know it later -- for example, as part of the following year's curriculum.”

-Alfie Kohn (1999)

The Schools Our Children Deserve

I hope you will reflect on the above quote when you teach in the preschool classroom. The big question many parents, teachers and other educators often ask is "How can we prepare children for kindergarten?" The question is in itself problematic because it implies that children have to be prepared for kindergarten. It also so implies that children need to be ready for kindergarten while ignoring what we know about children's development, how they learn, and that they are "eager to learn" long before preschool. The big questions should be related to the here and now:

- \* What is a preschool learning environment?
- \* What should children learn?
- \* What should children be taught in a curriculum?

What is a preschool learning environment?

Studies on learning, cognitive development and teaching have highlighted the importance of learning based on the relationship among individuals and the learning environment (context). Knowledge emerges as a result of activities engaged and shared in an environment that connects individuals, materials, cultural tools, and symbol systems. (Strozzi, 2001; National Research Council, 2000)

Knowledge and understanding are constructed through social interactions. Classrooms are inherently social places wherein teachers and children negotiate the curriculum together. The aim is to construct a teaching and learning environment in which children and teachers are given opportunities to make decisions, pursue authentic questions and concerns, connect what is known to the unknown, and be successful as they explore, test ideas, and discover through play, informal learning activities, and projects. Guided participation in the activities of children is the primary role of the teacher, and play and the expression of ideas through interactions with adults, peers, and the environment are the primary business of children. (Hill, Fu, & Stremmel, in press; Fu, Stremmel, & Hill, 2002)

What should children learn? What should children be taught in a curriculum?

In addition to a learning environment that encourages learning in relationships, the National Research Council (1999) suggests three principles of learning. The following principles, based on research, should be incorporated into the preschool curriculum (as well as in formal schooling):

Young children develop ideas and concepts that help them understand and make sense of their world. Learning and teaching is most effective when children build new understandings based on active reconstruction of existing knowledge and preconceptions. Teachers provide experiences and scaffold the children to build on and extend what they already know.

Young children need both basic factual knowledge and skills and a foundation of conceptual understanding in mathematics, science and literacy to develop expertise that will enable them to learn and make sense of their world. For example, young children should learn representational systems in early literacy, the concept of quantity mathematics, and causation in the physical world. Young children should also develop skills for gathering information, such as, identifying letters and numbers and ways to acquire information about the social and natural worlds. Thus, curriculum should be designed to promote the learning of these basic concepts and skills.

Metacognitive skills can help children to learn through problem solving in meaningful ways. Metacognitive skills or learning strategies enable children to reflect, question, predict and hypothesize. These skills foster evaluation and monitoring of their own learning. Teachers can guide children to learn and develop these tools for learning that are crucial for learning in all ages.

Early Literacy

Early, emergent literacy includes skills, knowledge and dispositions (attitudes) that are critical for future learning of conventional forms of reading and writing. Early literacy is best developed in social interactions in a literacy rich environment. The skills and knowledge base of emergent literacy promotes book and print awareness, functions of print, knowledge of narrative, letter and early word recognition, and listening comprehension. Through language rich activities, such as shared book reading, children learn language in a context that introduces them to print and enhances vocabulary development in an integrated, meaningful manner. Through shared book reading activities children also learn "conventions of print (e.g., knowing that writing goes from left to right across a page), beginning

forms of printing (e.g., writing one's name), knowledge of graphemes (e.g., naming letter of the alphabet), graphemes-phoneme correspondence (e.g., the letter b makes the sound /b/), and phonological awareness (e.g., that the word bat begins with the sound /b/) (Whitehurst and Lonigan, 1998) and reading for comprehension." (National Research Council, 2000)

### Mathematics and Science

Activities and projects based on children's interests in the world around them promote all domains of learning -- mathematics, science, literacy, develop metacognitive skills, and enhance conceptual knowledge. Mathematics and science can be found in a myriad of activities that solve real problems in the classroom and on the playground, as well as stories, block building, dramatic play, animals in the classroom and found outdoors, and so on. In many activities children learn about emerging mathematical and scientific concepts that encourage them to develop and use the tools of scientific thinking and testing: observe, record, explore changes, make predictions, ask questions, and find ways to test out their hypotheses. Children learn about living things, physical changes in solids and liquids, motion, speed, and balance; the needs and life cycle of living things; quantity, and measurement, etc.

The preschool curriculum should have activities that include the following basic concepts or ideas of mathematics (Ginsburg, Balfanz, & Greenes, 1999):

- \* Number -- counting and meaning of numbers
  - \* Shape -- identify and construct 2 and 3 dimension shapes; their properties
  - \* Putting together and taking apart -- promotes exploration of adding and subtracting, and relations between sets and subsets
  - \* Spatial relations -- exploration of relations such as in front of, behind, above, below, left-right which are important to navigating their surrounding and the world
  - \* Measurement -- explore quantity and physical attributes such as length, weight, temperature and money
  - Patterns and predictions -- introduction to patterns such as shapes, numbers, and sounds and encourage children to detect patterns for prediction
- Preschool curriculum should also include early science processing skills as an integral part the classroom activities as children investigate concepts and evaluate their learning:
- \* Observing -- notice different properties of objects and events using the senses
  - \* Classifying -- grouping objects and events according to their properties
  - \* Measuring and Using Numbers -- be able to:
    - Describe quantity using physical attributes such as length, weight size, temperature
    - Estimating
    - Recording data with the help of teachers or by themselves with drawing and other tools
    - Spatial relationships
  - \* Communicating -- using language, drawings and other tools to describe observed events and relationships
  - \* Inferring and predicting -- making predictions of what might happen based on past observations and experiences, including cause and effect relationships
  - \* Defining operation -- define terms and ideas used in the context of one's experiences and communicate how these terms are used, such as "what do you do" and "what you observe"
  - \* Making hypotheses -- propose explanation based on what is observed
  - \* Experimenting -- explore, manipulate, investigate to find what happens

Teachers play an important role in planning, supporting and guiding children to learn about math and science pre-concepts through the use of various teaching strategies that scaffold the children in process. All of these begin with the teacher observing and listening carefully to the children's interests, and understanding how children learn in order to plan activities that are real and meaningful in the lives of the children. In scaffolding the children in activity settings, teachers may use a variety of techniques such as asking the open-ended questions of what, how, and why; modeling; giving feedback; and cognitive structuring (providing structure for acting and thinking).

In short, preschool children should learn by engaging in activities that are real and meaningful to them - activities that encourage the development of skills, knowledge, ways of thinking and learning, and a disposition for learning. It is important to remember that preschools teach children the early skills for literacy and science and mathematics development in an environment that encourages learning through social relationships.

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Victoria R. Fu, Ph.D. is a Professor of Human Development and Director of the Institute for Learning. Her research interests focus on contextual influences on how people learn; inquiry based, social constructivist approach to teaching and learning; and process of transformation in teacher education. She has published extensively in professional journals and in books, and co-edited Affirming Diversity Through Democratic Conversations (1999) and Teaching and Learning Collaborative Exploration of the Reggio Emilia Approach (2002).

#### \_\_\_\_\_Tip of the Month\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Connections: An Archive of Printables for Parents (from PBS TeacherSource)

<http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/prek2/pconnect/printablearchive.shtml>

This site contains documents that can be printed and distributed to the parents of your students. Each document contains suggestions for parents to use in the home to further promote the skills taught in the classroom. Choose to customize the printable by "signing" your name or simply print a pdf document with no signature. Available in English and Spanish.

\*Hint: Educators have told us that they print the English and Spanish versions back to back. This allows everyone to see both languages!

Topics include:

- Summer Keep Up Skills
- Reading Tips
- TV Tips
- Homework Tips
- Exploring Science
- Cooking Counts
- The Winter Games
- A Trip to the Library
- A Family Trip to the Museum
- Summer Safety Tips
- School Bus Safety
- Healthy Eating Habits
- Exploring the Performing Arts
- Learning about Your Community
- Fall Math Fun
- Encouraging Social Skills
- Reading Skills
- Studying for a Spelling Test
- Letter of the Week

Playing with Words  
Everyday Activities  
Springtime Fun  
Letter Writing  
A Trip through History  
Celebrate 100th Day!  
Back to School Night  
Parent/Teacher Conferences

\_\_\_\_\_Resources for September\_\_\_\_\_

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/](http://www.readingrockets.org/subscribe/)

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

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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](http://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.

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