

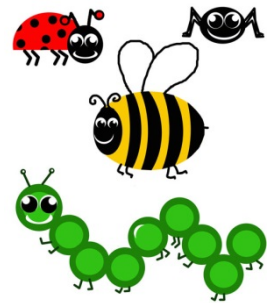


## May Newsletter Brighter Beginnings 2015



Community Helpers was our theme in April. What a busy month! We welcomed visitors from around the community to come talk to the kids. We want to thank all of these volunteers. You made our month very fun and interesting

In May we will be growing plants in our garden centre and discovering the wonder of the insects we see in our gardens. We will be raising Painted Lady Butterflies and watching them grow from a caterpillar to a butterfly.

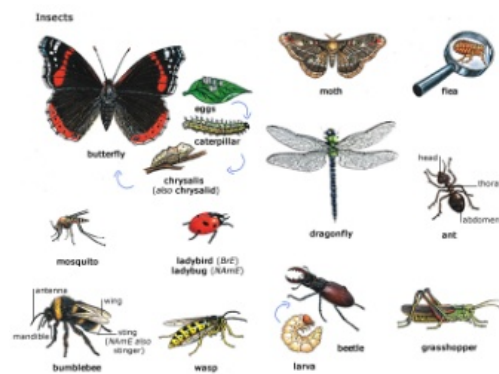


### Dress for the Weather!

As the weather starts to warm up, we will be taking the children outside to play on the outdoor equipment. Please dress your child for our wet soggy spring and hopefully for the sunshine to follow.

## WANTED BUGS of all KINDS

We ask that you begin collecting interesting bugs with your children. Please put them in jars with lids (and air holes). Then send them in to class. Each day we will look at the cool critters you have collected.



## Dates to Watch For!

**Our butterflies are due to arrive!**

Friday May 8<sup>th</sup>



### May Long Weekend

Friday May 15 & Monday May 18<sup>th</sup>- No School

### IPP Meetings

Friday May 22<sup>nd</sup> & and May 29<sup>th</sup>- I will contact you to schedule.

### Last Day for 3 Year Olds

Thursday June 18<sup>th</sup>

### IPP Meetings

Friday June 19<sup>th</sup>

### Last Day for 4 Year Olds

Monday June 22<sup>nd</sup>

### Goodbye Picnic

Monday June 22<sup>nd</sup>- This will take place at a park in the afternoon. More information to follow in the coming weeks.



## IMPORTANT NOTICE!!

The last day of school at St. John XXIII will be **Thursday June 18, 2015** for the 3 year olds and **Monday June 22, 2015** for the 4 year olds.

We will be planning a farewell picnic on Monday June 22<sup>nd</sup> in the afternoon and all parents are invited to attend. Stay tuned for more information on this event.



When someone new is picking up your child, please remind them to bring photo ID. Many Thanks!!





May is the month of Mary. We will be learning the Hail Mary prayer and will talk about the Rosary.

### Helpful Stuff...

#### The Alberta Child Health Benefit Program

Are you worried about the cost of going to the dentist? This provincial program provides health coverage for children in lower income families. It provides free extended health benefits such as dental care, eyeglasses and prescription drugs.

For more information or an application form, call 780-427-6848 or 1-877-469-5437 or visit the website at [www.employment.alberta.ca/FCH/2076.html](http://www.employment.alberta.ca/FCH/2076.html)



#### Finding a Family Dentist

Oral health is an important part of total body health. It is important to have a family dentist that can help you look after your teeth and mouth. If you have a dental emergency, your child would be more comfortable with a dentist who is familiar to them.

Here are some ideas to help you find a family dentist:

- ✚ Talk to your friends and neighbours about who their dentist is
- ✚ Contact the Alberta Health Services dental staff. They have a list of dentists in your area who are taking new patients
- ✚ Visit the Alberta Dental Association and College website at [www.abda.ab.ca](http://www.abda.ab.ca) and click on the Dentist Locator on the upper right.



## Toys, Toys, Toys!

If your child is bringing a toy to keep him/her company on the ride to school, please remind him/her to tuck the toy into the backpack when they get to class. We have so many toys in the classroom that we're afraid they're going to get mixed up or lost. Thank you for your help!



## Discovering Your Strengths

**Each one of us has strengths and talents that help us cope with the challenges of life and make us the unique individuals that we are. Here are some tips to identify strengths in order to help us reach our full potential.**

1. Find your talents. If you are unsure of what your talents are there are many online tests which can help you identify them. Also, your friends and family can likely point out what you are best at.
2. Be open to learning. Opportunities for learning present themselves every day. When you come across an obstacle don't give up; try a new approach, research strategies, or ask for help.
3. Reading is a great way to find new gifts. Find a topic that interests you and do some research on it. Books provide a wealth of knowledge on every subject and can help you work toward forming new strengths.
4. Learn a new skill. Perhaps you have always wanted to learn a second language, how to make a soufflé, or how to change a tire; you can find classes, books, and online resources to help you conquer any skill.
5. There are no stupid questions! Don't be embarrassed if you are unsure of something, asking questions is essential to personal growth.
6. Stay positive! Do not compare yourself to others. It does not matter if someone is more talented than you at a particular skill. What matters is your personal growth and sense of accomplishment.

Strathcona County  
Family and Community Services  
[www.strathcona.ca/fcs](http://www.strathcona.ca/fcs)  
780-464-4044

## Fine Motor Development:

### Developing Finger Dexterity Skills:

Finger dexterity refers to the ability to coordinate small finger movements to complete fine motor tasks. Coordinating finger movements is required during a variety of daily tasks including self care (i.e. dressing, opening bottles) and school activities (manipulating a pencil, producing legible printing, using scissors).

### **Strategies to help develop finger dexterity skills:**

**Playdough activities:** Roll small pieces of Playdough or clay between the thumb and index finger to make small balls.

**Treasure Hunt:** hide small items (i.e. buttons, beads) in Playdough and then have your child pick through it using the tip of their thumb and index finger to find them.

**Lacing/Beading:** Complete lacing and beading activities, finer string and smaller beads increase the difficulty of this activity.

**Games:** Encourage your child to participate in activities/games that have small pieces such as Lego, checkers, board games etc. Handling and manipulating small pieces with the tips of the fingers is a great way to promote finger dexterity skills.

**Squirreling:** Encourage your child to bring small items into and out of their hand using their fingers. Use the thumb and index finger to pick up one object at a time and wiggle it into their palm until 2-4 items are trapped under their ring and pinky fingers. Try to get your child to move the objects the opposite way– from their palm to tips of their fingers.

### Hand Dominance:

Hand dominance refers to which hand the student consistently uses during fine motor activities such as holding a pencil, using scissors and when manipulating small objects. The helper hand (non-dominant hand) assists the dominant hand by stabilizing the objects. There are many reasons why students do not consistently demonstrate hand dominance including– difficulty crossing midline, and decreased muscle endurance (fatigue).

### **Strategies to help develop hand dominance:**

- Always place fine motor materials directly in front of the student– by doing this the student makes the decision about which hand they would like to use.
- Encourage your child to finish activities with the same hand they started with, do not allow for switching part way through.
- Screwing lids on/off jars– one hand acts as the stabilizer (non-dominant) while the dominant hand does the work. Put stickers or treats inside the jar

- to help motivate your child.
- Coloring small pieces of paper– one hand is required to hold onto the paper (non-dominant) while the other hand holds and manipulates the coloring tool.
- Lacing Cards/Beading: one hand holds onto the card/string (non-dominant hand) while the other feeds the lace through or puts the beads on the string.

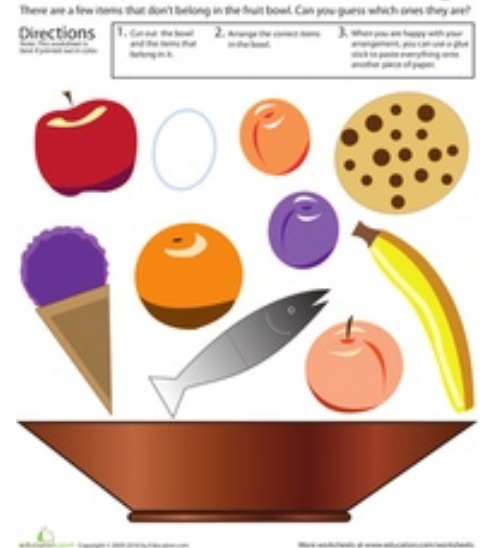
## Speech Corner: Categorization Skills

Ellen Bailey, R.SLP

One of the ways we organize our world is through categorization. Some children seem to absorb the concept of categorization effortlessly through play, talking with others and participating in everyday experiences but others need to be taught this skill. Effective categorization skills enable us to perform tasks efficiently. The ability to group things according to a common characteristic and then name that characteristic is a basic concept that helps children form a basis for structuring and organizing their world. When you systematically teach categorization strategies, you are not just teaching a single skill but a system for learning, problem solving and organizing, you are also teaching the foundation for processing, remembering and integrating new information. Many of us marvel at people who are always able to put their finger on an object or piece of information when needed because they know where to find it. This would not be possible without having developed complex organization strategies that include categorization.

- Categorization helps students form a basis for structuring and organizing their world.
- Categorization strategies can become a system for learning, problem solving and organizing.
- Categorization is a foundation for processing, remembering and integrating new information.
- Most children learn categorization strategies incidentally through experience and interaction with others.
- Categorization skills involve language learning.
- Categorization strategies develop along a continuum from simple to complex (you can start with familiar objects – put a few different food items on a plate and have your child find all the cookies. At a more advanced level, you could use pictured objects and have your child sort fruits and vegetables)

### Fruit Bowl Mixup



- Words help people categorize. For those who think visually, categorization is very difficult. Try to use different category words when talking and playing with your child (i.e. We are sitting on a couch. A couch is a piece of furniture).
- In order to categorize, individuals must be able to pay attention to relevant features. For those who focus too much, too little, or get stuck on certain details, categorization is very difficult.
- Categorization involves abstract concepts based on ideas, qualities and symbols, and can be very difficult for "literal thinkers."
- Categorization involves rules and patterns. For those who make up their own rules, categorization can be very difficult.
- Visual cues and prompts help with categorization.
- Physically manipulating and touching objects can make a categorization activity more meaningful. Try having your child sort some laundry – by color (find all the red things) item (find all the socks) or owner (find all of your clothes).
- Teach emerging skills in a variety of situations and with a variety of materials to promote generalization across contexts.
- Teach language related to the skill being taught. Self-talk is a strategy that helps with organization in categorization activities. It is good to model for your child as you do an activity (i.e. Oh, this is a cat – I will put it over here with the other animals)

Here are some activities you can try with your child to build on their categorization skills....

1. Sorting objects into two identical sets – Have your child put towels in the laundry basket and shoes on the rack in the closet or sort the mail by putting the envelopes in the mail basket and flyers in the recycle box.
2. Sorting objects by one feature - When it was time to clean up after a craft, ask your child to collect first all the yellow crayons, then orange and so on.
3. You may want to use two bins and have your child sort pictures into the appropriate bins. A structured work task can be a valuable tool for teaching sorting and categorization because once learned, the familiarity and predictability of the task enable the child to focus on the new concepts being taught. Our theme for May is bugs and plants, so children could sort pictures of various bugs and plants (easier) or get more specific and sort out insects from other creepy crawlers (difficult). Generally speaking, it is easier to sort objects than pictures.
4. Some examples of categorization ideas for early language users include: Color, Clean/Dirty, Fast/Slow, Big/Little, Old/New, Broken/Fixed, Hot/Cold,



One/Many, People (boy, girl, man, woman), Animals (dogs of different breeds, land animals, birds, fish, farm animals, wild animal) Function (wears, eat, drink, write with, ride in, play with), Shape (round, square, oval, rectangle, etc.), Location (indoors/outdoors; grocery Store, hardware Store, school, home), Location within rooms at home (bedroom, kitchen, garage, bathroom, family room).

5. Categorization strategies can be taught through functional activities such as: Clearing the table after a meal, Putting toys away, Emptying the dishwasher, Unpacking groceries, Sorting laundry, Making a grocery list /going shopping, Making a snack, Setting the table.
6. Labeling cupboards, shelves, and containers with either pictures or written words is a useful strategy, not only to teach the skill but to serve as a visual cue to promote independence.
7. While in the car, you could play a "Let's Name things" game. Say a category (i.e. things that are yellow, clothing, furniture, body parts or farm animals) and everyone takes turns naming something that belongs in that category.
8. There are some apps that target categorization skills such as Compare-a-twist, Let's name things fun deck, Categorization HD...and many more. Google "preschool categorization activities" to find some online resources. Check out <http://www.education.com/worksheets/preschool/sorting-categorizing/> for free worksheets and printables for kids.

Have fun incorporating CATEGORIZATION into your daily home routines!

Summarized from Resource: Academic Interventions by Jim Wright

