



## October 2015

# St. John XXIII Brighter Beginnings

Thanks to everyone for helping us make September such a success! We have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know all of the students in our program. Students are making excellent progress learning classroom routines and partaking in activities.

### Absences

Please remember to report your child's absences to in one of the following ways: use our automated student attendance hotline [1-877-246-9970](tel:1-877-246-9970), online <http://elkislandcs.schoolconnects.com> (SafeArrival Portal website), or <https://stj.eics.ab.ca/contact>

### Themes

We will be learning about Thanksgiving, colours and then towards the end of the month, Halloween. As part of our themes we will be reading stories, completing activities and crafts and learning songs.

## Dates to Remember

**October 5** – Early dismissal/Staff Meeting. **No class** at St. John XXIII for students.

**October 7** - Professional Development for staff. **No class** for students.

**October 10** – Thanksgiving Day. **No class** for students.

**October 14** – There is **class** for students at St. John XXIII for both the morning and afternoon classes.

**October 17** – **Family Oriented Programming Workshop** at Fort Saskatchewan Public Library (6:00-7:30 pm).

**October 21** – **Family Oriented Programming Day visits**. **No class** for students.

**October 27** – **Family Oriented Programming Workshop** Kids Yoga at St. John XXIII (5:30-7:00 pm).

**October 31** – **Halloween Party**. There is **class** for students at St. John XXIII for both the morning and afternoon classes.

**November 2** – Early dismissal/Staff Meeting. **No class** at St. John XXIII for students.

**November 11** – Remembrance Day. **No class** for students.

**November 14-18** – Fall Break. **No class** for students.

# Halloween Party

We will have our Halloween Party on Monday, October 31. Please send your child to class dressed in their costume, if they are dressing up. As well, we ask that you do not send any toy weapons (toy guns, swords, laser or light guns) to school. Parents, grandparents and younger siblings are welcome to attend our party starting at 10:00 am for our morning class and 1:30 pm for our afternoon class. For the afternoon class, you are welcome to come at 1:00 for the school wide costume parade in the gym. I will be emailing a sign up sheet for snacks, if you wish to contribute to our party. If you would like to send in a Halloween snack, please ensure it is nut free.

# Birthday Celebrations

This year, we will celebrate birthdays as they come up. We will sing happy birthday to your child on that day and give them a birthday card. If you wish to send in a nut free treat such as cupcakes or cake (as long as it is already cut into child size portions), we can share it with the class.

## TALK TIME with Mrs. Bailey

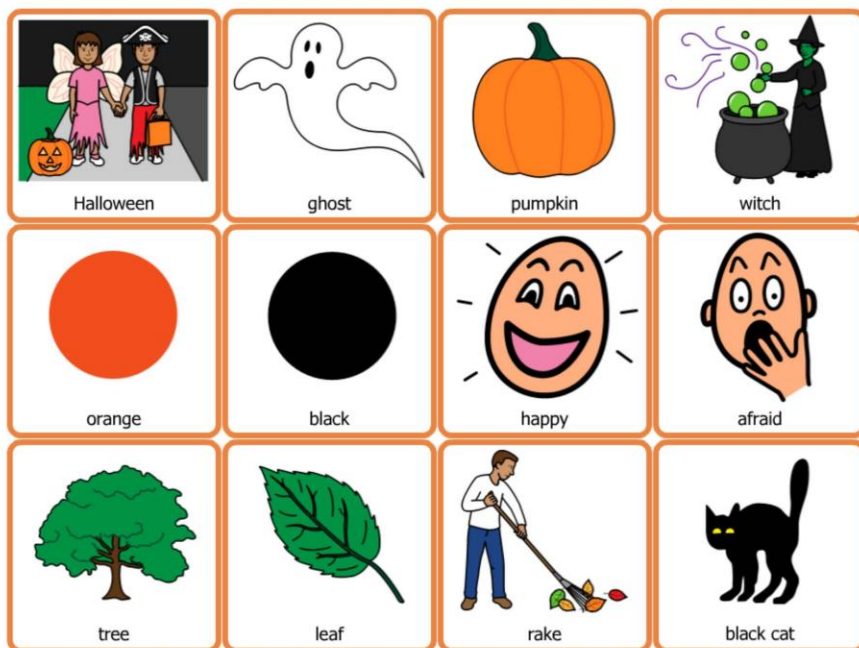


It is always exciting to hear children say more words, combine more words together and use more language to control the world around them!!! Hopefully you are already seeing little changes in your child's ability to communicate...becoming more confident, trying to say new words, or telling you about some things they do at school!!

The Hanen Centre is a great resource for parents and professionals. I have participated in a number of their training sessions and they have such great tips for how to communicate with children to help them learn language. This month I want to draw your attention to some online tips that are divided into different levels of development – 1) tips for parents of young children who communicate without words 2) tips for parents of children who have just started talking and 3) tips for parents of children who talk in sentences. Go to the following link to read the latest tip (I think they change weekly or monthly so check it out regularly!) <http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Parent-Tips.aspx> or [Hanen Parent tips](#)

You may know of people who use sign language to communicate or you may have thought of teaching your child some signs. Sign language is not just for people who are hard-of-hearing or

deaf. Some children can benefit from using signs. It is great for kids who will imitate actions but not words, have trouble saying words, or for kids who need extra cues to help them learn the meaning of words. Here are some fall and Halloween-themed words and signs you can try out at home! Happy Fall!



# OT Corner



The Focus for Occupational Therapy this month is “Dressing Skills”.  
In preparation for Halloween children often get more practice with dressing.

Getting clothing off develops before putting clothing on because it is easier. Fasteners can be learned separately from putting the piece of clothing on. Undoing fasteners is easier than doing them up.

Getting dressed involves learning and refining a variety of skills. Here are some examples:

- Fine Motor skills:
  - Reaching up to put a jacket on the hook.
  - Grasping the clothing with 1 or 2 hands: putting on socks
  - One hand holds while the other arm moves into the sleeve of a jacket
  - Doing up fasteners typically requires the use of 2 hands – 1 to stabilize and the other to move the button or zipper or snap. Finger strength and dexterity is also needed to push a snap together or to push a button through the hole in a shirt.
- Gross motor skills:
  - Balancing the body while two hands are used to put on socks.
  - Lifting one leg and to slide it into the pant-leg.
  - Balancing while reaching to pull jacket off a hook
- Motor planning:
  - We are especially aware of this skill when we learn a new task. If you are at your first tennis lesson, you will learn and practice the order of the movements and the most effective positioning of your body. Learning to get dressed is a new task for children and involves learning new motor plans. Each dressing task is like a new racquet stroke to learn in tennis.

Teaching can be done in 3 ways and usually some combination of the 3:

- Instruction: by telling
- Modelling : by showing, imitating
- Step by step
  
- First be clear what you want the child to do. Telling the child to “get ready to go”, is not as clear as “put your pants on and then your shirt”.
- Make sure you have your child’s attention – making eye contact and getting the child to look at you while you speak or demonstrate.

## **Telling:**

- Give your child time to process before giving any other instructions. Give lots of positive praise and tell your child what s/he did right.
- Keep your tone of voice either neutral or happy.
- Avoid telling child what s/he did not do. Instead point out what s/he did do and if needed, one thing s/he could do a different way.

**Showing:** children imitate what we do.

- Move slowly and make sure your child can clearly see what you are doing.
- Point out the important parts – i.e. “ See where I am putting my feet”
- Some dressing activities are best imitated while the child stands or sits opposite you, and others, by being alongside or behind you. If one doesn’t work, try another.
- Think out loud and make intentional mistakes. “Hmm, it didn’t get that on right, I’ll try it again”.

**Step by step:**

- Break it down into smaller steps. If you are not sure, do the task yourself and think about the different actions you did. For example: pick up the pants by the waistband; lower the pants and lift up one leg; put this leg into the opening in the pants, lift up the other leg and put it into the next hole/opening, pull the pants to the knees, stand and pull pants up to the waist.
- You can try what is called forward or backward chaining. With backward chaining, you start teaching at the last step having helped your child with the other previous steps. For forward chaining, your child does the first step and then you finish. Once a step is mastered then add another step.

**Tips:**

- Teach undressing first
- Practice dressing when you and your child are not hurried or tired. You might choose to practice on weekends. Then when you are all in more of a hurry, have your child do the easy, already mastered parts and you do the more difficult ones.
- It is easier to practice dressing skills with clothing that is looser fitting or with fabric that stretches. In particular, looser socks and T-shirts are much easier to learn to put on. If needed, you can play games with putting silly things on to get the idea – i.e. put large oven mittens on the feet. These are very easy to slip on and could be a preparatory-step to doing socks. It is easier to put dry feet into socks than damp ones.
- There is not just one way to put on a piece of clothing. Ask someone else the steps of how they put on a T-shirt. Try out this other way yourself and then see if this is easier for your child.
- Choose clothing that your child already likes to wear to help with motivation. Some children are sensitive to the feel of certain fabrics. They may not wish to wear a pair of pants or a jacket for these reasons – too tight, too scratchy. If the seam on the socks bothers the child you can turn some socks inside out and if this does not make them look too different. Also some children find it troublesome to change the clothing with the change in seasons. Possible strategies: Some do best when it is done gradually; or when involved in the choosing; or by following a rule that says you have to wear long pants after this date on the calendar.
- Balance – reduce the need to balance the body so the child can focus on the other skills they are learning: sit rather than stand; lean up against a wall when lifting legs to put on socks or into pants; brace the front of the shoe against the wall so you don’t have to hold it in place when slipping in the foot.
- Sweaters and shirts with a picture or logo on the front make it easier for telling the front from the back.
- Giving only a couple of choices what to wear i.e. the Dora shirt or the one with Paw patrol characters.
- As you choose your clothing or clothing for your child, talk about how it connects to the weather.
- Teaching buttons: Use a sweater or other knit/stretchy fabric that is not too slippery that has large buttons and button holes that are the same size or larger than the button. Teach undoing before doing up. Make up stories to help with the sequence and increase motivation.
- Jackets:
  - If putting one sleeve at a time is a struggle, try an overhead method. Place the open coat or sweater face-up on the table or floor in front of your child. The neck or hood should be nearest to the child’s body. Have the child kneel down or reach towards the table, put his/her arms through the sleeves, and then stand up and raise them toward the ceiling. This will flip the coat over the head onto the back. Here is a you tube video (how to put your coat on)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73qom9lueV8&feature=youtu.be>
  - Start with a hooded jacket – put the hood on first and then slide the arms into the openings.
  - Position the jacket at the back of a chair. The child then sits down and slips his/her arms into the sleeves.
  - Some jackets are large enough that the child can unzip it part way and then push it down to the floor and step out of it. This is great for a child who is in kindergarten and struggling to learn to engage a zipper. Make up a story for engaging the zipper.

## References - Resources:

- [http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/getting\\_dressed.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/getting_dressed.html)
- <http://www.lifewithababy.com/lwabblog/233577>
- <http://www.inclusionoutreach.ca/content/cs/Teaching%20Techniques/Your%20Child's%20Dressing%20Workbook.pdf>