

Teacher Jess' Two's Newsletter! 8 AM

Hello Two's Families!

It has been a wonderful start to our year together! Thank you for all of your support! I am thrilled and excited to be your child's first teacher and introduce them to a fun, empowering, and educational school experience.

The class so far...

To start off this newsletter, I wanted to share all of the things we have done in class so far! Our first theme for the year was *Fall into Fall*. On our very first day together, we dove right in and painted leaves! Play dough and an animal and rice sensory table were also available to explore. We learned how to hold onto a rope with colored rings to get to the outdoor patio (something we are still working on and are improving every class!) and played outside in the sand box and with trucks. We talked about fall colors and how the leaves change in fall.

During our second class, learning about leaves continued when some students made leaf sun catchers with fall watercolors. We also learned to sing the "Tiny Turtle" song! We practiced sitting at the table and waiting for Teacher Jess or Teacher Megan to get snack out of the cubby (which is nearly perfected in class now!).

In our third class, we played with Indian corn and paint and used the painted Indian corn to roll across paper to make a cool design. Of course, many of us just wanted to paint the corn and that was neat, too! Our class performed a science experiment with the corn as well. We put the corn in a container of water and this was put into a small, indoor greenhouse to see if it would grow. The rice in the sensory table was also traded out for pinto beans and pinecones.

On Thursday, our class painted "leaves" by smashing up aluminum foil into a ball, smashing the ball into fall colored paints, and smashing the paint covered ball onto paper. Everyone really liked the chance to get to smash paint all over a piece of paper. When we walked outside from the classroom, we talked about different animals we could act like and acted like tiny, quiet mice! Around this time, the kiddos also started playing a "game" they created. It goes that when Teacher Jess says it's time to line up, everyone starts jumping up and down by the door and starts yelling and laughing "Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!" This game has been played every class since this and it is hilarious. We looked at our Indian corn experiment and saw no change.

Next week our Indian corn had lots of green sprouts coming out of it! It had grown! We also began our new theme *Fall Animals*. On this day, we made animal tracks with our hands of different northwest animals, like bears, deer, and eagles. We went outside to play and did different animal stretches like the cobra and downward dog. We also learned the "Days of the Week" song (set to the Adams Family theme song) and talked about the weather outside. Students also learned to say thank you when they got their snack! (We all say: Thank you is so easy to say, Thank you for our snack today! Thank you!)

Thursday, our class got to make pipe-cleaner spiders! Each student counted out four spider legs and one yarn spider web and then helped a teacher tie the legs into a knot. As a class we counted our two human legs and the eight spider legs. When we played outside we sang "The Itsy Bitsy Spider." We also saw some squirrels playing outside our class window! We tried to play musical instruments and play with dancing ribbons as a part of movement before snack. Many students did not enjoy this, but we will try this again when the class continues to settle into a routine.

This past week our class discussed bats. We glued pieces of black yarn to paper bats and practiced some complicated fine motor skills (dipping yarn into glue, pulling it out of the glue, putting it on the paper without getting glue all over your hands). We learned the word "nocturnal" and tried to take three steps with our eyes closed without hitting anyone as if we were blind as a bat. Tri-colored pasta and acorns were added to our sensory table and a pumpkin has been brought into our classroom! Students learned a new song called "Slow Turtles, Fast Rabbits" that involves crawling like a turtle when the song is slow and hopping like a rabbit when the song is fast. This is what we will try to do for movement for the next few weeks.

Finally, animal face painting happened. The students that participated picked out an animal they wanted to be and we pretended to be this animal when we transitioned outside by growling, barking, or meowing.

Looking ahead...

This class has had lots of energy, which is great! We have been playing around with structure, songs, movement, and games to help harness this energy during transitions to help the day run smoothly. Expect there to be different schedules for classes as we continue to try out new things. Daily schedules can be seen outside the classroom door. Also, both two's classes are different in terms of needs and interests so expect to see different schedules for the two different classes as well.

This class just started to get into books, so we will continue to read one a day and discuss more about the books we are reading.

Our next theme will be *Fall Harvest* for two classes. We will prepare our lanterns for the Fall Harvest Walk and make a craft with apples and pumpkins. Then it's our last class before Halloween!

For our Halloween class on the 29th, I would like to invite each student to wear their Halloween costume to class. This is not required for class. I will be wearing my costume and our theme for the day will be around monsters and sensory activities. I have some monster themed counting crafts and plan on having a sensory exploration with pumpkin guts, creepy crawlies, and bobbing for apples, as well as treats!

After these October units, I would like to explore a longer unit on weather and then a short one on Thanksgiving.

Announcements...

As we go into this next month of school, there are a couple of things I would like to prepare for and ask for support with.

Weather—The rains are coming! We will go outside on days with light rain. Please bring appropriate clothes! If you want to have a separate pair of boots to leave at school, we are open to this. I will have a bin boots can go in for you. Raincoats and anything else you want to send to keep the kiddos dry are much appreciated! If it is rather heavy rain and the gym is open for our use, please still bring appropriate clothes but know we will most likely be going to the gym for other activities or just staying inside of the classroom.

Labels—Please label everything that you want your child to come home with. Teacher Megan and I are doing the best we can to keep track of your child's belongings but lids to snack containers, water bottles, coats, etc. are being found with no owners or students are putting things into cubbies they think their name is on but is not. With cooler weather this will mean more clothes and things to misplace so please label loose things you want to have returned with your child with either their name or initials. With this in mind, though, I will be starting a lost and found for the classes:).

Conferences—The three's and four's classes will be having their conferences this month. The two's will not be having conferences this month. The current plan is to have optional conferences closer to Winter Break. If, however, you want to meet with me earlier about your child, feel free to schedule a time with me to do so!

Bathroom Expectations—In both of the Two's classes, many students are not or are currently working on being potty trained. Unfortunately, there is no bathroom in our classroom and the kid's potty involves taking a walk through the kitchen, hallway, and the other classroom to reach. Currently, Megan and I are verbally asking kids if they want to use to potty two to three times a class and taking those who say yes. We are also bringing students to the potty if requested by the parent as many times as requested. I want to formally make this available to all parents and have clear expectations from you all about bathrooming. Please look for the attached sheet about bathroom expectations and bring it to Teacher Megan or myself. I will also have blank, printed copies at school. Lastly, Megan and I will be filling out slips involving diaper changing or using the potty daily and putting those in cubbies.

Birthdays—There are no November birthdays in this class.

At home...

School has been so much fun! Here are some practical ways to bring home all the fun if you are interested!

Days of the week—Talk to your kiddo about what day of the week it is and what number it is. We sing a song about this but at school it will only ever be a Tuesday or a Thursday, so talking about other days of the week at home will foster awareness.

Weather—each day we look outside and talk about what the weather is and how we need to dress for it. Talk about this at home! Is a bathing suit okay to wear if it is snowing? Do you wear snow boots in the warm sunshine?

Please, thank you, you're welcome—We are not super strong sticklers on this but we do practice saying thank you when snack is passed out and use manners when someone decides to share a toy or is asking for something from someone.

Cleaning up snack—We are encouraging everyone to clean up their own snacks before playing with toys—throwing garbage away, putting containers in their lunch boxes, and finding their cubbies. Every student has participated in this!

Science experiments—We grew corn sprouts in our class and it was so fun asking them what they thought would happen when we put the corn in water! Do things at home to create curiosity about the world around them and to demonstrate cause and effect! We will be performing several experiments in class this next month.

Thank you!

I hope to see you all at the Harvest Walk on the 23rd! I will be having a substitute teacher for a planned vacation day on Tuesday the 27th, Teacher Linda (Many of you may recognize her from our front desk staff) will be stepping in for me with Teacher Megan still present as well. Linda was a preschool teacher for years before coming to Portland Parks and is excited to spend a day with our 2's! Thank you for such an awesome start to the year so far! Please feel free to talk to me in person or e-mail me at jrivoli@portlandoregon.gov about any questions or concerns.

Enjoy some pictures below!

Teacher Jess





