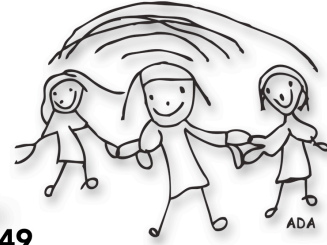




the
**Cooperative
PLAYSCHOOL**

Play-based Preschool Education Since 1949



The

Coop Scoop



• December 2009 •

www.cooperativeplayschool.com • 611 East Prospect Avenue • State College, PA 16801 • 238-3922

December at a Glance

- 7 Community Dinner to Celebrate our 60th Anniversary: hope to see everyone there!
- 11 JCC Cultural Exchange
- 14-15 Goodbye Ms. Brittney!
- 15-16 Book Drive Donations Due, Children will giftwrap on these days
- 15-16 Goodbye Ms. Sara!
- 20 Board Meeting at the school,
- 21-23 Food Drive for the food bank
- 21-22 Holiday Tea for all Families: 11am
- 23 Last Day of school in 2009

December Birthdays

- 6 Cara turns 4!

Looking Ahead: January

- 4 Back to School!
- 7-8 MANDATORY winter clean-up, 7pm
- 8 Parent coffee during school
@ meeting house social hall

Curriculum Committee Forming

Please see Mary Lee if you are interested in more information about this opportunity to define and shape our school's play-based curriculum.

Amazon.com Fundraising:

What's that blue dot at the top of the Coop homepage? Why, that's a quick and easy way to support your favorite preschool!

Here's how it works: Enter Amazon.com through any of the links on the Coop website. Then navigate around and shop for ANYTHING you like. When you purchase your items, a percentage of your total will be donated to The Cooperative Playschool. Last Holiday season alone, we earned \$200!

ANYONE can use the links and order. EVERYTHING that is purchased after entering Amazon through our links will earn us money., ANYTIME. Please pass the word on to family, friends, and co-workers... hey, they were going to order the stuff anyway, so why not earn the school some much-needed financial help while you're at it?

Happy Holidays to all. Thanks for being part of my Coop Family... You guys are the best!

-Kate

From the Teachers:

It is a busy time of year for many of our families, and the children are filled with anticipation. We will honor this anticipation in our circle story this month as we 'travel' from home to home and see how they bring light to the dark winter nights. We will light a campfire with a Native American song/celebration; light Hanukah candles and Advent candles. Ideally we will alternate between a story circle where we act out a story as we sing and the selecting of individual songs monthly. Some of you may recall our mouse circle story where the children crawled through tunnels to find the pumpkin home, jumped like crickets and rolled off the gate in October.

Traditionally this is the season where we give to others and Coop wants to honor this tradition in our own way. We are putting on a **multicultural book drive for a group of 30 children in Chicago**. Sarah Kerr, our America Reads student on MWF told us of her sister's head start class in the inner city. I was very moved and sent along gifts of multi-cultural dolls and wooden cars for the classroom. The children responded so enthusiastically that Sarah's sister requested that we give each child a gift of a book for the holidays. Sarah will come and help the children wrap these gifts on **Tuesday December 15th and Wednesday December 16th**. She will have cards with the children's names to place on the wrapped gifts. Please write your salutations and child's name inside the book cover. Sarah will leave town with these gifts and her mother promised to supplement books in case we do not buy enough for all 30 kids. Please see the sign up sheet at Coop. Place a sticker on the tree with your child's name on it if you would like to participate.

Both Ms. Mindy and I request that you bring in these gifts in lieu of gifts for us. We understand some of you like to have your children express their appreciation and welcome hugs and pictures, but please refrain from feeding us or giving us things. We will not speak for our America Reads students however. They will not be returning in the spring due to class schedules and if you would like to show them your appreciation in any form, it would be a wonderful gesture. We will be giving our **goodbye hugs to Brittany after two and a half years on Monday the 14th and Tuesday the 15th and to Sarah on Wednesday the 16th**.

In the past we have collected **items to donate for the food bank** this month. We would like families to bring in boxes of food items: cereal, pasta, rice, oatmeal etc we will build a tower with these boxes and see how high a pyramid we can assemble before we deliver the food to the food bank. Please bring in your donations the week of December 21st-23rd. You can come admire our tower at our **Holiday Tea Party December 21st and 22nd**. Join us for songs and cookies at 11:00 am.

-Mrs Kat

Reminders

If your child will be absent...

...please call the Co-op at 238-3922 to let the teachers know. You can leave a message on the answering machine if necessary.

Pick-up

If someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, it is important to call a teacher or let her know in person that morning.

Weather-related School Closings

When the State College Area School District cancels or delays the starting time of school; the Co-op will be closed. The Co-op also has the option of closing, independently of the SCASD.

Fundraising Through Groceries

Now is the time to sign up for January's Giant and Weis Gift Cards. Please sign up (on the bulletin board) for January's gift cards by December 21st.

Holiday Gift Giving

(an older article, but still a great one!)

Submitted by Paulina Erices and Ona Feinberg

*Holidays are coming and I start looking around asking where I am going to fit more toys in my house! Sure, I believe that kids learn **through play** so I feel committed to keep an "environment that promotes learning." So I sat down with the 10 catalogs I got by mail and took a look at all those wonderful toys... It is overwhelming! There are so many fun things I would like to get... even some for myself... Plus, the boys enjoy almost everything... they actually have almost everything they can play with... I need help!!!!...*

The following are some suggestions of alternative gifts that may be sent to family and friends.

Spend time together. Certificates for a day trip to the pool, the zoo, or a special performance are meaningful and special gifts.

Encourage Children's hobbies. Talk to the children to discover what they like to do. A class in martial arts, gymnastics, or a day ski pass might be most appreciated. You can provide transportation and each time they go, remind the children the experience is a gift from you.

Choose toys that have no real end, or winners and losers. A box of scarves from a second hand store or irregular handmade building blocks can be surprisingly satisfying to children.

Choose a toy you remember loving from childhood and include a story about your memories with it.

Make something – a hat, a checkerboard, a kite. Children sense the difference when someone cares enough to make them something.

Give something really useful. Age 1: small silverware set. Age 2: flashlight. Age 3: step stool. Age 4: bowls, baskets, sewing kit. Age 5 and up: accessories to encourage your child's natural interests: swim goggles, a new basketball, art supplies, etc.

Give something alive. Bulbs in the fall, seeds in the spring, a houseplant or cactus in a hand-painted pot, unique thoughtful gifts. Always check before giving animals.

Honor the child with a donation to a nonprofit organization that addresses their concerns. As children get older they have their own concerns that are meaningful to them. Even the very young child can understand the importance of giving.

Classic Toys, Better Gifts?

Playing cards, Board games, Rubber stamps, Marbles, Jacks, Wooden Toys, Slinkies, Tiddlywinks, Crayons, Markers, Paper, Watercolor paints, Finger-paints, Pick-up sticks, Wooden building blocks, Magnifying glasses, Magnets, Modeling clay, Paper dolls, Jump ropes, Wagons, Blackboards and chalk, Dress-up clothes, Color forms, Felt board and felt figures and shapes.

What's missing from the above list? What was your favorite "old school" toy? Submit answers to Kate, and they'll be included in next month's issue!

Educational toys

from Parentmap.com

First, parents should understand that "all toys are educational," according to Danielle Kassow, Ph.D., research associate at Talaris Institute in Seattle. "Playing with rocks and sticks is educational." According to

Kassow, the key to learning from play is the human interaction. "Children are learning every moment of their lives. The best kind of learning is through human interaction on a daily basis: cuddling, singing, reading, taking a walk."

What about claims that toys make kids smarter? "Don't buy a toy because you think it will make your child smarter," advises Kassow. "Children are born with a genetic blueprint, but parents have the greatest influence on how they develop. You can't make your child smarter. You can only give a child optimal experiences to enhance learning."

Written by Tera Schreiber

Notes for Cold Weather

- Brr. It's getting chilly! Please remember to dress your children in clothing that is weather-appropriate. Pants, warm jackets, mittens (that attach to coats) and hats are necessary for outdoor play.
- We do go outside every day unless it is raining or extremely cold (under 20 degrees).
- Remember self-help when choosing outdoor clothing for winter wear: boots that are easy to slip on, mittens rather than gloves, jackets with easy zippers, and hats that do not need to be tied. Encourage self-help at home so your child will be able to dress in outdoor clothing with only occasional help.
- To help children become more self-reliant when putting on their outdoor clothing, encourage them to use the "upside-down and over-the-head method" of putting on their jackets. Teach them to pull up their own zippers after grownups have helped to get them started.
- When the weather requires boots, children need to bring shoes or slippers to wear in school. A pair of slippers can be kept in your child's bag. Remember to put the child's name in each slipper and boot.



December Holiday Circle Adventure

Begin circle with several stations set up- a tipi can be suggested by a round blanket with a 'campfire' set up inside with a candle to light; an advent wreath/candles can be set up with red and green colors and a haunukah menorah can be placed on a small table. The story suggests that children ask their mother why it is getting darks so early and she tells them that there is light to be found if you look in the right places, so the children set off to find the light.

Song:

*Two circles are formed and one group are the 'birds' and fly around the circle coming in when they are to sleep.
Groundhog's crawl and burrow in the middle.*

The North wind doth blow, (swing arms to one side & other)
We soon shall have snow, (make snow with fingers falling)
But what will poor robin do then, poor thing? (Gesture thinking with hand)
He'll sleep in the barn, to keep himself warm, (motion sleeping)
And hide his head under his wind, poor thing. (place head under arm)

The North wind doth blow, (repeat motions)
We soon shall have snow,
And what will the groundhog do then, poor thing?
A burrow he's dug, he'll sleep warm and snug,
And won't wake again until spring, poor thing. (make yawning motions)

(Insert the story of the children here)

Song:

Long is our winter, dark is the night,
But if you search you'll find the light.
Go search and see, go search and see,
Go look little children and you shall see.

Spoken:

Through the dark and winter snow, on our journey we must go,
Is there a place where we can find- shelter, light and people kind?

(The imagination is of a Native Tipi)

Spoken:

Now here's a house of soft deer skin. (Indicate the shape of a tipi)
It circles round from beginning to end. (Right arm making large circle parallel to the floor)
See them chopping wood to burn, (Pointing)
Grab an axe and take a turn (Making chopping motion over head to the floor)
Now pile up the wood, and carry it in, (Make motions of piling wood on arms)
The Indian singing is about to begin! (Motion taking off the wood and sitting down in circle)

Drum beats and sing: (offer some children drums others can dance with rattles)

The Earth is our Mother, We must take care of her ://

Hey yana Ho yana Hey Yung Yung://

The Sky is our Father, We must take care of him://

Repeat chorus

The Moon is our Grandmother, We must take care of her://

Repeat chorus (become more quiet and still)

(spoken)

Thank you Native friends so true (bow with hands in prayer position)
We are now warmed through and through.

May good stars blessings shine on you. (hands overhead, lower to bless)

(spoken)

Here we would so like to stay, but we must journey on our way. (wave goodbye, take
Over hill and over dale, we will journey and not fail hands and march)

(Long is our winter song repeated)

Look, there's sleds there one-two –three (motion and count)
Some for you and some for me! (Get into sitting position
Holding reins- pass out bells)

Song:
Jingle Bells

(spoken while collecting bells)

How fun a ride we had tonight- but look ahead I see a light.

Song:

We are Three Wandering Travelers Two circles form, children skip outside
Out in the Wind and the Rain the circle and tap on inner circle
We saw your light shining so bright shoulders to be let inside.
Tapped on your window pane singing
Let us come in, Let us come in
Out of the wind and the rain
Let us come in, let us come in,
Please do not turn us away.

(spoken)

The door swings open and there within (right arm makes swinging motion)
Are those who say 'Welcome Friend' (arms open in welcome)
Four candles standing in a row, (hold up four fingers)
We see the advent's holy glow.

Song:

At Advent time, at advent time, we like to light our candles://
We light (one/two/ three/four) candles shining bright,
There's (three,two,one,no) weeks left 'till Christmas night,
At Advent time, at advent time, we like to light our candles.

Let us bring these people cheer,
For they celebrate Christmas here,
Let us pick a song to sing
And see what joy here we can bring:

(select from song choices: Santa Claus is Coming to Town, Who's got a beard that's Long and White etc.)

Thanks you friends, Now we're warmed through, (bow with hands in prayer)
May stars good blessing shine on you (hands above head, palms open-
Move forward bestowing blessings)

Song:

We are Three Wandering Travelers

(spoken)

The door swings open and there within
Are those who say 'Welcome Friend'
Eight candles shine in a row
We see menorah's holy glow

(right arm makes swinging motion)
(arms open in welcome)
(fingers held like candles)

Song:

Oh Hanukkah or Hanukkah, come light the menorah,
Let's have a party, we'll all dance the hora,
Gather round the table we'll give you a treat,
Dreidles to play with and Latkes to eat,
And while we are playing, the candles are burning bright,
One for each night they shed such sweet light to remind us of days long ago ://

Spoken:

Look they have a gift for you- a dreidle spinning oh so true!

Song:

We are the Dreidles of Hanukkah, spin all around, spin all around :// (spin in place)
Spin, spin, spin, spin; fall to the ground, fall to the ground. (falling)

Spoken:

Thank you friends, we're now warmed through
May stars good blessing shine on you.

Song:

We are Three Wandering Travelers
End with: back home again we can stay.

We have learned a lot tonight,
People hold within the light,
May all our candles shine so bright!

Song:

This Little Light of Mine.