

4K NEWSLETTER • COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Learning
through
play, every
student,
every day!

Issue 1
September 2023

Welcome to 4-Year-Old Kindergarten!

A very special welcome to all of our 4K students and families! This is our first Appleton Community 4K school newsletter for the 2023-2024 school year and we hope you will find the contents provide you with important information about our school, as well as helpful information you can use as you support your child's development.

Appleton Community 4K was designed to be a community collaboration with our childcare, preschool, and Head Start partners in the Appleton community. We are currently collaborating with 14 community partner sites and 4 school host sites, to provide high quality early learning experiences for our 4K students.

Our school motto is Appleton Community 4K, building lifelong learners through collaborative partnerships and play-based learning. This first newsletter is dedicated to providing you more information about our play-based learning model.

When children this age are asked what they did at school, it is very typical and accurate for them to answer with, "I played." To learn more about what they are learning during their play, I encourage you to contact your child's teacher who can share with you the learning objectives and how they are achieved through your child's play.

As we move through our school year together, we look forward to sharing the many new skills your children learn in their 4K experiences.

Did you Know? — Play develops Brains!

Our current understanding is that approximately 85% of our brain's development for learning, working and social engagement occurs between the ages of Birth to Five. Research is pointing to new understandings of early brain development through creative play. As children explore and experiment during play, as well as use their imaginations they are learning language, math, science and so much more.

Why play? When children are actively engaged in play, the prefrontal cortex of the brain develops understandings of how the world works and how we interact with it, building connections, and neuropathways. These connections across information centers in the brain build the foundation for learning, working and interacting that are essential for positive outcomes as children grow.



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Upcoming Events

- Learning Through Play Playgroups sponsored by Birth to Five Outreach: join on Thursdays each month from 9:30-10:30 AM. Registration is required, see below for more information.
- Play with Purpose: join on Tuesdays each month from 9:00-10:00 AM or 10:30-11:30 AM. Registration is required, see below for more information.

For more information OR to register for any of these events, please contact:

(920)852-5595



The Literacy Corner



Appleton Area School District's (AASD) elementary English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum is based on Wisconsin's Common Core State Standards. This month's Literacy Corner will focus on how parents can support their child's reading through read alouds at home.

Read Aloud

Research shows that reading aloud is the single most important thing you can do to help a child prepare for reading and learning. When parents read aloud they encourage a love of reading, promote language development, build early literacy skills and develop a lasting bond with their children.

"So please, oh PLEASE, we beg, we pray,
Go throw your TV set away,
And in its place you can install,
A lovely bookshelf on the wall."

-Roald Dahl, Charlie and the Chocolate
Factory-



Parent tips: ...

Mem Fox's Ten Read Aloud Commandments

1. Spend at least ten wildly happy minutes every single day reading aloud.
2. Read at least three stories a day: it may be the same story three times. Children need to hear a thousand stories before they can begin to learn to read.
3. Read aloud with animation. Listen to your own voice and don't be dull, or flat, or boring. Hang loose and be loud, have fun and laugh a lot.
4. Read with joy and enjoyment: real enjoyment for yourself and great joy for the listeners.
5. Read the stories that the kids love, over and over and over again, and always read in the same 'tune' for each book: i.e. with the same intonations on each page, each time.
6. Let children hear lots of language by talking to them constantly about the pictures, or anything else connected to the book; or sing any old song that you can remember; or say nursery rhymes in a bouncy way; or be noisy together doing clapping games.
7. Look for rhyme, rhythm or repetition in books for young children, and make sure the books are really short.
8. Play games with the things that you and the child can see on the page, such as letting kids finish rhymes, and finding the letters that start the child's name and yours, remembering that it's never work, it's always a fabulous game.
9. Never get tense around books.
10. Please read aloud every day, mums and dads, because you just love being with your child, not because it's the right thing to do.

PLAY IS LEARNING!

Mr. Roger's first coined the phrase, "play is the work of children." Children learn a wide variety of skills, both academic and social when they play. Here are some examples of play activities and a child's learning that you may see when visiting your child's 4K classroom.

When Children Do This:

Put blocks in a truck and dump them out



Finish a puzzle

Scribble on paper

Make Play-dough

Turning pages of a book

They Are Learning To:

Understand size, weight and number concepts
(Math and science)

Complete a task from start to finish
(Study habits and self-esteem)

Using writing as a means to communicate
(Fine motor development and writing readiness)

See how materials change and following directions
(Science) (Listening Comprehension)

Print Awareness
(Reading readiness)



Adapted with appreciation from Sun Prairie Four Kids

For additional examples of how today's play leads to elementary school success visit pages 9 and 10. . .

411.2 Student Nondiscrimination

The Appleton Area School District does not discriminate against students on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or physical, cognitive, emotional or learning disability in its education programs or activities.

El Distrito Escolar del Área de Appleton no discrimina a los estudiantes por sexo, raza, color, religión, edad, origen nacional, ascendencia, credo, embarazo, estado civil o parental, orientación sexual, identidad de género, expresión de género o físico, cognitivo, discapacidad emocional o de aprendizaje en sus programas o actividades educativas.

Tsev kawm ntawv hauv Appleton tsis cais tawm menyuam kawm ntawv los ntawm qhov yog poj niam los txiv neej, haiv neeg, cev nqaij daim tawv txawv, kev teev hawm, lub hnuv nyoog, keeb tiv ntawm haiv neeg, poj koob yawm txwv, kev ntseeg, lub cev tsis tab seeb, muaj txij nkawm los yog leej niam leej txiv, hloov lub cev poj niam mus ua txiv neej hloov txiv neej lub cev mus ua poj niam, tus yam ntxwv poj niam los txiv neej, hais lus coj li poj niam los txiv neej los yog cev nqaij daim tawv, lub hlwb kev xav, tus xeeb ceem kev xav los yog muaj qhov ua rau kawm tsis tau ntawv nyob rau cov khoo ka kawm ntawv los yog tej kev ua ub ua no.

Amend Dates: 6/23/2014 and 04/22/2019



Parents . . . You Can Play Too!



As your child's first teacher, you've been playing with your child for years. Whether on the playground, in your house or just taking a walk, many of your daily routines include play. We consider play any activity that is open-ended and enjoyable, and often includes creating, imagining or exploring. As you reflect on the many times (just this week) you have played with your child, consider your role as you played. Were you observing and responding to questions, were you dressing up or creating art, were you on the floor building with blocks, or rolling a ball? These are all wonderful ways to play with your child, and allow you the opportunity to support their learning through imagination, role playing, building vocabulary and being active.

Here is a secret we are eager to share... Play is good for adults too! Parents who take the time to play, experience stronger social ties not only with their children but other adults, increased flexibility in problem solving and greater overall happiness.

Family Activity Bags

Each month your child will bring home a Family Activity Bag. In this Family Activity Bag, you will find a book that is loved by children and adults alike. You will also find a number of activities that are designed to extend your child's interest in the theme and support the skills we are working on in 4K.



Please read the book aloud with your child first, and then ask your child to use the pictures in the book to tell you about the story. After reading together, select one or two of the activities from the multiple activity cards included in the bag to continue your time together playing. Each day, read the book with your child giving them more opportunity at the end to talk about what they heard and learned. You can keep the activity bag for 4 days.

Research over the past few decades has shown that when parents are involved in their child's school experiences, children experience stronger math and reading achievement, increased motivation and self-esteem and better school attendance. Remember that this Family Activity Bag is meant to provide you with fun activities to extend your child's learning. There is no right or wrong way to complete the activities, so just have fun together!

The Creative Curriculum®

In June of 2020, the AASD Board of Education approved a revised 4K Curriculum and recommended the purchase of The Creative Curriculum® as supporting 4K instructional materials. The Creative Curriculum® includes teaching guides that create environments and activities that focus on project-based units of study in 7 different areas across the school year. Using a model of study, or inquiry, young children learn not only academic concepts, but the process of learning itself.

One of the reasons The Creative Curriculum® was chosen for our instructional materials is the focus on purposeful play. The units of study provide experiences and materials to engage children in investigations. We know that children learn best when they are engaged in intentional play experiences; where they are exploring, investigating, and discovering new interests and new ideas- all within experiences children can explore first hand.

The implementation of Creative Curriculum supports consistent learning experiences across all 4K classrooms, enabling students to learn through child directed units of inquiry in high quality play environments. In doing so, students will experience 4K instruction that addresses the whole child, the wide developmental range that is typical of this age group, and their individualized interests and supports.



A Teacher's Role During Play



While children are exploring and developing through play, their teachers have an important role in supporting their learning. Before your child even enters the classroom, their teacher has intentionally selected books, toys and materials that will lead your child's play in the targeted learning objectives. And while your child is playing, their teacher will join them to facilitate their learning, expanding and extending the play activities to incorporate the areas of the 4K curriculum such as language, math, science and movement.

Our 4K teacher's role is to recognize the level children are playing at and extend their learning through questioning, observing, responding and introducing next level activities in their play. For example if a child is building a castle, a teacher may ask them how visitors will enter the castle (language). They may encourage a child to invite classmates to a party at the castle

(social development). Perhaps they will ask how people will see out of the castle and encourage children to add windows (experimentation with math and geometry).

Our castle is just one example of how your child's teacher will be supporting them to explore and learn new skills as they are playing. In order to ensure play is productive and leads to new learning, teachers are continuously observing and noting each child's progress. This allows them to plan for materials and activities that are just right for each child's level of development and build in materials that lead children to reach the next step in their exploration and learning. You will learn more about your child's development, play and progress four times this year, twice at parent teacher conferences and twice in a written progress report.

Guiding Principles of Appleton Community 4K:

We believe that a successful and effective four year old kindergarten program:

- ◇ Recognizes early relationships between the individuals in a child's world matter.
- ◇ Is universal, yet optional and provides choices for children and their families.
- ◇ Is inclusive of all children, recognizing and supporting diversity and individual stages of child development.
- ◇ Prepares the whole child.
- ◇ Uses knowledge of child growth and development as the foundation for educational experiences.
- ◇ Is engaged with and supported by the community.
- ◇ Supports parents as the child's primary teacher.
- ◇ Views a child as a part of a family.
- ◇ Takes place in high quality environments.
- ◇ Fosters each child's love of learning.



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APPLETON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

HEALTH SERVICES * P.O. Box 2019, Appleton, WI 54911 *

From the school nurse: Beginning of Year Reminders

Hello and welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! We are excited to see your students back and we look forward to working with them. In order to help ensure we have the most up to date information for those students with health conditions, please remember to fill out an updated health condition plan which can be found [here](#). Please return these to your student's school office once completed.



Any medication that will be kept at school must have a new [medication administration form](#) completed each school year. Please note, if your student has a health plan that lists their medication and dosing, you do not need to also complete a medication administration form. All medications must come in their original packaging or pharmacy bottle with the student's name and dosing information. If your student is in middle or high school and you would like them to receive the stock medication, you will need to give permission for them to receive these medications. Please reach out to your student's school to get more information.

Per Wisconsin law, students are required to be fully immunized or have a signed [waiver](#) on file. To see the current state requirements please see this [letter](#) from the Department of Health Services. If your child has not yet received the appropriate immunizations, please schedule an appointment with your health care provider or the City of Appleton Health Department/Outagamie County Health Department. Additional information about vaccination requirements can be found [here](#). If you have any questions please reach out to your school nurse.

Lastly, every day your student attends school matters! If a student misses 10 days per year for the lifetime of their school career, that adds up to 140 days... almost a full school year. Research and experience teach us that students with poor attendance are at greater risk for school difficulty. Making up missed schoolwork is very helpful, but missed classroom instruction cannot be made up. If you have concerns about getting your student to school or have questions about when to keep your student home, **please** reach out to their school to discuss.

Thank you and make it a great year!
AASD Nurses



Dear 4K Families,

You can be a 4K HERO!

We are excited to announce we will be continuing our HERO attendance initiative this school year to ensure that students are **H**ere, **E**very Day, **R**eady, and **O**n Time.

Research in early learning has demonstrated that students who miss 18 or more days of school are less likely to develop early literacy skills and will have a more difficult time learning to read.



**Here
Every Day
Ready
On Time**

Join us and become 4K heroes! **From October 2nd - October 20th, any student who has three weeks of consecutive attendance will receive a 4K hero decal for your car or window!**

We are so excited to see our 4K students at school every day!

**EMBRACE
THE
EVERY
DAY!**

DID YOU KNOW?



Students who are chronically absent in 4K through 1st grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.



By 6th grade, chronic absence is a proven early warning sign for students at risk of dropping out of school.



Frequent absences even as young as 4K, can be a sign that a student is:

- Losing interest in school
- Struggling with school-work
- Dealing with a bully
- Facing some other difficulty

WHAT CAN YOU DO?



Make school attendance a priority. Help your child to be on time to school.



Help your child maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.



Develop backup plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, neighbor, or another parent to take your child to school.

HOW DOES LATE ARRIVAL AFFECT STUDENTS?

Minutes late per day	Equal days worth of learning lost in a year
5 mins	3.4 days
10 mins	6.9 days
15 mins	10.3 days
20 mins	13.8 days
30 mins	20.7 days

Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half of students who miss 2-4 days in September go on to miss nearly a month of school.

HOW TO CREATE A GOOD ROUTINE:



Set a daily schedule with the same wake-up times and bedtimes for each school day -- and stick to them.



Prepare morning routines the night before. Each night, have your student pick out their outfit, and have school supplies ready by the door. Being prepared the night before makes the morning routines simpler.

Today's Play . . . Tomorrow's Success!

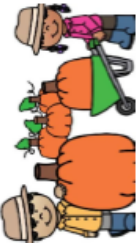

Today's play in early childhood is the best foundation for success in school. Play develops many skills that are necessary for children to learn to read and write for success in math and science. Play also develops behaviors that help children learn all school subjects. This chart shows the **skill that children are learning** as they plan and the ways that these skills help children develop into better students. *This does not mean that preschoolers are ready to be taught to read and write.* It means that they are learning many of the things that will **lead to success in elementary school** by spending their time playing today.

<p>Today's play <i>(examples of play)</i> When children build with blocks, buildings, houses, cars, etc...</p>	<p>Helps preschool-age children learn</p> <p>They are learning spatial relationships – learning to judge distance, space and size.</p> <p>They are improving their visual memory – remembering what they see.</p> <p>They are learning to achieve a self-selected goal – completing their own projects.</p>	<p>Leads to elementary school success</p> <p>Understanding spatial relationships helps children to succeed in math and science.</p> <p>Visual memory is needed for learning to read.</p> <p>Independent completion of tasks is very important for success in all school subjects.</p>
<p>When children put blocks away onto labeled shelves...</p>	<p>They are learning to match, classify, and sort by shape and size.</p>	<p>Matching, classifying and sorting are important underlying skills for many types of learning, especially math and science.</p>
<p>When children play with small interlocking blocks...</p>	<p>They are improving their small muscle control – picking up and moving objects.</p>	<p>Good small muscle control is needed for learning to write.</p>
<p>When children work a puzzle...</p>	<p>They learn to stick to a job and complete it, and feel good about completing it.</p> <p>They are learning to make figure-ground discriminations – noticing the difference between the background and the picture.</p>	<p>Children who are persistent learners do better in all school subjects.</p> <p>Children need to make these type of distinctions to learn to recognize letters and to learn to read.</p>
<p>When children string beads...</p>	<p>They are improving their eye-hand coordination – their ability to use their eyes and hands together.</p>	<p>Eye-hand coordination is needed for learning to write.</p>
<p>When children mix two colors of paint to make another color</p>	<p>They are developing an understanding of cause and effect.</p>	<p>The foundation for science education is real-life experience with cause and effect.</p>

<p>Today's play <i>(examples of play)</i> When children draw a picture of the sun...</p>	<p>Helps preschool-age children learn They are learning to use pictures or symbols to represent their ideas.</p>	<p>Leads to elementary school success Understanding that letters and words are symbols, and practice with using symbols is needed for children to learn to read and write.</p>
<p>When children pretend to write with markers and crayons...</p>	<p>They are learning directionality – the way that adults write across the page from left to right in English.</p>	<p>Understanding the directionality used in English gives children the background they need to make sense of reading and writing.]</p>
<p>When children choose whatever they wish to do with art materials...</p>	<p>They are learning to make choices, to try out ideas, to plan and experiment.</p>	<p>Children who are independent learners and who can try out their own ideas are better learners in all school subjects.</p>
<p>When children play fireperson or adult roles...</p>	<p>They are developing perspective-taking skills – the ability to think about the way others act, think and feel, and develop empathy and feelings for others. They are learning to use symbols to represent something else – a block can become a fire truck.</p>	<p>Children with perspective-taking skills understand that their teacher sees their work differently than they do. This skill is needed for children to make use of the feedback about their work from their teacher. Learning to use symbols is what learning to read and write is all about.</p>
<p>When children play restaurant together or play grocery store together...</p>	<p>They are improving their language skills. They are learning how to work together to overcome problems. They are developing an understanding of social expectations and the attitude of others, and they develop the ability to anticipate how to act in real-life situations.</p>	<p>Language skills underlie all learning in school. Problem-solving skills help children to learn in every school subject. Children become better at figuring out what is expected of them, academically and socially.</p>
<p>When children play in water...</p>	<p>They are learning conservation of volume – that no matter what size or shape the container is, a specific amount of water will not change. They test, experiment and guess what will happen.</p>	<p>Conservation of volume is an important science concept. This is the same process scientists use in research.</p>
<p>When children play in wet and dry sand...</p>	<p>They observe first-hand the changes that water makes to sand, learning that combining things together can create new and different things.</p>	<p>Observing changes when things are combined is just like many types of scientific experiments.</p>



October Play Ideas Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 National Homemade Cookies Day! Make your favorite recipe, allow your child to measure and stir	2 Go for a walk and collect leaves and make a fall picture using glue, finger paints or crayons	3 National Taco Day is tomorrow... what taco treats can you make with your child? 	4 Join Appleton Public Library for <u>Preschool Storytime</u> 10:00-10:30	5 National "Do Something Nice Day!" Read the book: BE KIND! to your child	6 Build an obstacle course for child to crawl, climb or walk through. Let your child take the lead	7 Make animal sounds and movements. What animal is it? Encourage child to repeat the sound or movement or create their own animal
8 Make a sticky fall tree with contact paper and some paper leaves	9 Make a fall sensory bin. Add leaves, small gourds, acorns or small pumpkins	10 National Walk to the Park Day! Explore your local park or find a new park to run, play or have a picnic!	11 Join Appleton Public Library for <u>Preschool Storytime</u> 10:00-10:30	12 Yesterday was International Day of the Girl Child! Celebrate little girls read: 	13 Make some puffy paint pumpkins using whip cream and orange food coloring	14 Make some fall scented playdough 
15 Search around the house to find things that are orange	16 Practice bouncing, rolling and throwing a ball with your child	17 Make a meal together; encourage child to scoop, pour and mix	18 Join Appleton Public Library for <u>Preschool Storytime</u> 10:00-10:30	19 Have a dance party with your child! Play some music and dance; encourage child to take the lead	20 Sorting Activity: Find some items to sort with your child like socks, blocks, or food	21 Fill a large container with water; find items that sink or float
22 National Color Day! Play, sort colorful blocks or paint a picture of colorful items	23 Collect leaves outside and do leaf rubbings with crayons and paper!	24 National FOOD Day! Make some of your child's favorite foods to enjoy!	25 Join Appleton Public Library for <u>Preschool Storytime</u> 10:00-10:30	26 Cut a pumpkin and pull out the seeds for a fun sensory experience! 	27 Bake pumpkin seeds from your carved pumpkins for a fun snack! 	28 Apple Tasting! Cut a variety of different kinds of apples or make applesauce. Which one is your favorite?
29 Make a Fall Alphabet Tree with your child!	30 Go to the library and choose some fall books to read like: <u>Hallo Fall</u>	31 National Caramel Apple Day! Enjoy caramel apples				

Join the AASD Birth-Five Outreach and Appleton Community 4K for a

BLOCK PARTY

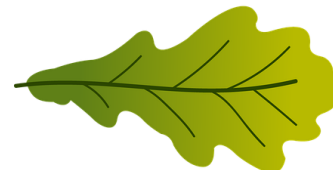


Thursday, October 12, 2023 from 6:00 - 7:00 PM

Community Early Learning Center

313 S. State Street, Appleton

Join us for a FREE night of learning through block play! Research shows that children develop many important skills through block play, including math, creativity, social skills, physical skills, spatial reasoning and more! Activities are geared for children ages birth to five years and their caregivers. Siblings are welcome!



Registration is required to attend.

Contact: Danielle Tzakais at
(920)852-5595 #2 by October 9th



3-5 Year Old Developmental Screenings

Appleton Area School District is proud to offer free developmental screenings for all children between the ages of Birth-5 prior to Kindergarten. Children must live in the Appleton Area School District.

Parents/guardians do not need to have concerns to schedule a screening. We encourage all families to come to a screening, preferably before attending 4K.

The Developmental Screening is designed to:

- **Educate** families about typical child development and growth
- **Develop/Expand** awareness of available community resources
- **Identify** young children in need of further assessment

The Screening looks at all areas of child development including:

- How your child talks
- How your child listens
- How your child thinks
- How your child moves
- How your child uses their hands



Early Intervention Program
Outagamie & Winnebago Counties

"Supporting Families to Help Their Children Learn and Grow"

To schedule your individual developmental screening, please contact our screening secretary at (920) 852-5595 ext. 61017. Screenings are held at the Community Early Learning Center, 313 S. State St., Appleton, WI 54914. Screening appointments are held during the school year from September through March.