

Public Preschool Office
Viking Elementary School
500 East Wall St.
Holmen, WI 54636

Ms. Sue Eitland, Principal
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608.526.3316, ext. 4133



From the principal's desk...

Thank you...

- To everyone who attended our PBIS/Pyramid Model Literacy Event in November. We hope you came away with some social-emotional tools/strategies to use for your parental toolkits!! We had fun hosting and seeing your families!
- To the parents who served on our PreK PTO Mini Grant Review Committee. This group reviewed and approved four grant submissions by a majority vote. This support will allow our current and future students to benefit from new purchases brought forward from the creative ideas of our staff to incorporate into their classrooms.

Reminders

- Public Preschool Outreach Events take place every District Early Release Day, which is also a No School Day for 4K/EC. In December, we will meet at the Children's Museum in La Crosse from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.. Note: There is not an Early Release Day in January 2024.
- Children should wear their winter gear each day (coat, mittens, hats, boots (if snow), snow pants (if snow), etc.) since the weather has turned colder and additional snow will likely arrive soon. We do play outside most days, especially when the temperature is above zero.

Mark Your Calendars

- On December 11th, from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., please join us at the Children's Museum of La Crosse. As a reminder, any caregiver can bring your EC/4K child and other family members.
- Winter Break/No School **from Dec. 23 through Wednesday, January 1st**. Classes will resume on Thursday, Jan. 2nd, 2025.

Additional 4K/Early Childhood News

- With the holidays upon us, I came across an article with tips for parents that you may find useful. The article is at the end of this newsletter. Hope you are able to take away a few key tips to make the season a very happy one!

Have a wonderful Holiday Season, and Best Wishes for the New Year!
~Sue Eitland





THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM INTEREST AREA: CLASS LIBRARY

The Library Area is a very important part of your child's classroom. It's where children gain the foundation for reading and writing. It's also a place where students can relax and enjoy the wonderful world of books.

We encourage students to look at books, listen to recorded stories, retell stories, and "write" their own stories throughout the day. Sometimes children dictate stories to an adult, which we record for them.

We read stories to the children every day. Reading introduces new ideas, helps students learn how to handle problems that come up in life, and mostly encourages children to develop a love for books. As children listen to us read, their own reading skills begin to develop.

Here are some of the things we do as we read:

- Look at pictures and ask: "What do you see?"
- Encourage children to predict what will happen next: "What do you suppose will happen now?"
- Encourage children to repeat words, rhymes, and phrases they've memorized.

What You Can Do at Home

Research has shown us the important role families play in helping children learn to read and write. The single most important thing you can do is to read to your child every day. When your child sits next to you as you read, he begins to connect books with good feelings. Here are a few more things you can do with your child.

- Encourage your child to talk about the stories you read.
- Ask questions like, "I wonder what will happen next, or "I wonder why..."
- Try to relate the story to something in your child's life ("That looks just like Grandpa's dog!")
- Visit the library and check out books that interest your child.
- Give your child paper and pencils, pens, or markers and let him experiment with writing.

If you would like some help choosing books, or guidance on how to read with your child, please let us know. To keep your child's home library well stocked, you can draw on the resources of your local public library. When you take the time to read to your child every day, you are doing the very best thing to help your child grow up to be a successful reader.



Virtual Backpack

The School District of Holmen has implemented a "green" approach for distributing flyers from community organizations, and has discontinued the process of sending paper flyers in your student's backpack, unless they are school related. The information is divided into three sections, by grade levels, and updated on a regular basis.

Click on this link:

<https://www.holmen.k12.wi.us/community/pre-k-elementary-school-flier.cfm>

to be directed to the actual webpage which is housed in the COMMUNITY/PARTNERS tab of the homepage.

Note that most of these advertisements are not district publications (unless marked). The District enables their online distribution as a community service to inform you of educational opportunities, activities and events available in our area.

Be Prepared for Inclement Weather or Emergencies

As a reminder, The School District of Holmen utilizes a text message notification system to alert families and staff about emergencies, including school closings due to inclement weather.

Additionally, we will communicate information regarding school closings or delays on the following platforms:

1. District's Homepage: [www.holmen.k12.wi.us]
2. Facebook Page: [<https://www.facebook.com/holmenschools>]
3. Instagram Page: [<https://www.instagram.com/holmenschooldistrict>]
4. Local Media Outlets: [WXOW, WKBT, WEAU, La Crosse Tribune]

We encourage you to stay connected with us through these channels to receive timely updates on any changes to the school schedule due to inclement weather.

The safety and well-being of our students and staff are our top priorities, and we want to ensure that everyone is prepared and informed during these situations.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the District Office at, 608.526.6610.



Please note:

If there is a 2-hour school delay, the AM session of Early Childhood and 4K will be cancelled for the day, but the PM session will run as usual.

If school is cancelled or there is an early release due to inclement weather, all Public Preschool activities and programs for the remainder of the day/evening will also be postponed.



Wednesday, December 11th is a District Early Release Day. Therefore, **EC/4K students will not have school!** Please join our staff at the Children's Museum from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Explore the museum with your family and friends! Engage your sense as you discover all that this interactive museum has to offer. Hope to see you there!

Winter Fun

It is important for kids to stay active in the winter months and to get some fresh air. Safety is a priority. Be aware of the winter terrain. Wear a helmet when skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, and sledding. Always dress appropriately for the weather and be aware of changing weather conditions. Get outside and enjoy winter!

10 Winter Activity Ideas:

1. Go sledding
2. Build a snowman
3. Search for animal tracks
4. Shovel snow
5. Try snowshoeing
6. Make a snow golf course in your backyard and play
7. Take advantage of a friend's offer to go ice fishing, skating, skiing, etc.
8. Make a snow sculpture
9. Build a fort
10. Make snow angels

Dress for the Weather

- Wear several layers of loose fitting, lightweight warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer layer should be tightly woven and water repellent.
- Mittens are warmer than gloves.
- Wear a hat. Most of your body heat is lost through your head.
- Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.
- Keep dry. Change wet clothing to prevent a loss of body heat.

From the Health Office:

Nurse: Emily Hanes BSN, RN

When to Keep Your Child Home:

1. Any temperature of 100 degrees or higher requires exclusion from school. If your child is requiring Tylenol or Ibuprofen to keep the fever down, they should stay home. They should be fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication to maintain a normal temperature.
2. Cold symptoms serious enough to interfere with the child's ability to learn.
3. If your child has diarrhea and/or vomiting, keep them home until their bodies have had time to recover. Sometimes, children return too early and end up having a relapse or infecting more students.
4. Coughing that causes difficulty breathing, moderate to severe chest pain and/or vomiting.
5. Headache severe enough to interfere with learning.
6. Abdominal pain accompanied by elevated temperature, vomiting, or diarrhea.
7. Sore throat serious enough to interfere with swallowing or accompanied by a fever or rash.
8. Pink eye-if fever present, behavior changes or unable to avoid touching the eyes.
9. Certain bacterial conditions which are prescribed an antibiotic, such as strep throat and impetigo, require a student to be on the antibiotic for 24 hours prior to returning to school.
10. Unknown rash.

Vision Screenings: The Lion's club was here for vision screenings in October. If any issues were found, you would have already been contacted. In kindergarten, your student will receive both a hearing and vision screening.



The Importance of Learning Early Concepts

Basic concept development is important for early school success. Concepts typically need to be taught. It is important to use concept words in everyday conversations and situations. Concepts follow a developmental timeline. The following is a list of concepts by the age when they should be understood:

2-3 years old: in, on, under, off, up, down, soft, heavy, big, tall, red, and all

3-4 years old: up, top, in front of, in back of, next to, around, hard, light, same, little, blue, yellow, green, brown, orange, white, pink, purple, empty, full, more, and less

4-5 years old: beside, bottom, forward, backward, down, low, behind, between, above, below, different, short, fat, thin, small, long, high, low, each, any, every, none, enough, and wide

5-6 years old: ahead of, first, last, inside, over, around, through, middle, between, nearest, farthest, old, young, thick, not many, few, several, most, widest, whole, early, and late

Liz Dahlen and Caitlin Mosel
Speech/Language Pathologists
Holmen Public Preschool

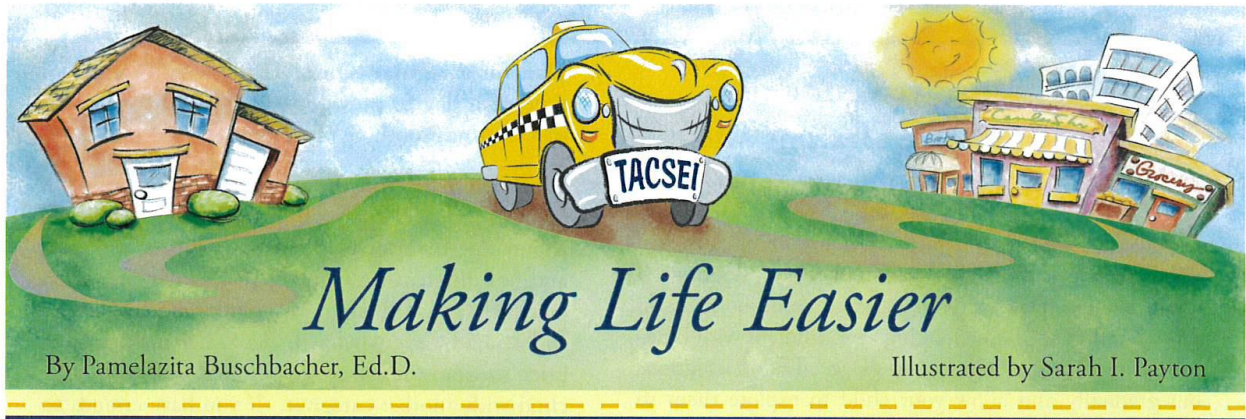
Pyramid Model - Second Step Social Curriculum Strategies for School AND Home

All 4K students are learning the *Second Step* social curriculum in their class. This is a series of lessons that teach specific social skills that are age appropriate, such as listening, following directions, identifying and naming feelings, managing strong feelings, joining in play and thinking of solutions when there is conflict. One of the lessons each week uses puppets to act out scenarios and the children can help the puppets figure out how to use strategies to solve their problems. It is often easier for children to identify what others should do before they are able to react appropriately in the moment. You and your child could create and name a puppet to use at home. Have the puppet help act out a problem your child might be having and have your child help the puppet work out what they should do.

Some other specific strategies your child will be learning in this curriculum include the following:

- *Belly breathing* is taught as a way to help children calm themselves when they are feeling strong emotions. A good way to practice this is to have your child lay on the floor with a stuffed animal on their stomach and work on breathing in and out and watching the animal go up and down.
- They also practice using "*attentoscopes*" which is making pretend binoculars with their hands to focus their attention on what they should be focusing on.
- Additionally, a focus is working on *naming their feelings* when they get upset by placing their hands on their stomach, belly breathing and saying "Stop. I feel _____", this is something you can model for your kids when little upsets like spilling a glass of milk happen to you at home!





Making Life Easier

By Pamelazita Buschbacher, Ed.D.

Illustrated by Sarah I. Payton

Holidays: Strategies for Success

While the holiday season is filled with enjoyable activities, events and traditions, it can also be a hectic and stressful time. Travel, shopping, loud music, bright lights, unfamiliar food, and busy schedules can turn typical routines upside down! The disruption to routine can be particularly difficult for children who depend on routine and predictability to engage in appropriate behavior.

The following tips will help ensure that the holiday season is enjoyable for you and your child.



Tip: Prepare your child for changes.

Talk to your child about changes to the schedule and environment. Look at pictures from previous holidays and talk about what happened during those events. Also talk about this year's special programs and about behavior expectations, e.g., "we will sit and listen quietly during the presentation...when the program is over, we will go to the lobby and have some cookies and punch." Discuss upcoming trips several days before the departure date. Let your child know when you will be leaving, where you will be going, and what you will do while away. Repeat these conversations several times before traveling.

Tip: Involve your child in preparations and minimize surprises.

If you are going to decorate the house or bake special goodies, involve your child and make the tasks fun! It could be upsetting for your child to come home from school to find the home looking very different with unfamiliar items and things out of place. Take decorations out gradually and allow your child to explore them so that she has time to adjust to the changes.



Tip: Pace your holiday activities.

Busy holiday calendars can leave adults and children worn out and stressed. When possible, balance times of high activity with calm, relaxed times. Try to spread activities out over the holiday season.

- ★ **Keep aspects of your typical routine whenever possible.** Consistency and familiarity can help build coping skills for the unfamiliar. As much as possible, preserve bedtimes and other routines. Allow for a leisurely bath, story, song or cuddle. Eat meals together.

- ★ **Plan for a regular 'Quiet Time'.** Try to build in time each day to provide your child with activities that she finds soothing or relaxing.

- ★ **Don't shop 'til you drop.** If your holiday season involves lots of shopping or errands, think carefully about how to involve your child. Stores will look and feel different this time of year as they are often extremely crowded and noisy. Children may become frightened or overwhelmed. Consider making trips brief, shopping at less crowded times, or leaving your child with another caregiver. If you have errands to run, limit the number of places you visit and let your child know that the errands will end at a fun place for her (e.g., a park, playground, ice cream store, etc.).

Tip: Give clear directions.

Give your child a positive direction that assumes she will cooperate. For example, instead of saying "Amy, do you want to get on the plane?" it is better to say, "Oh look, it's time to walk onto the plane. 1-2-3-4-5, Let's go." Remind her of expectations. For example, you might say, "Remember, walking feet on the plane." It is also helpful to show your child the behavior using pictures or by modeling it yourself.

- ★ **Use Positive Words.** Clearly and simply state what you expect your child to do instead of what not to do. Encourage your child in a way that lets her know that she is exhibiting the desired behavior.

- ★ **Give warnings that change is coming.** Most young children need help transitioning from one activity to another, especially if they are engaged in an activity that they enjoy. Let your child know in advance that a change is coming. Give a few staggered warnings letting her know how much time is left in the current activity as well as what is coming up next. Help your child through the transition by talking to her or singing a song such as "The Clean-Up Song" or adapting a familiar song to the task.



★ **Use 'Wait Time'.** A wait time of about 4 to 20 seconds is often all that is needed for a child to process and respond to a request.

★ **Provide choices, whenever possible.** Providing limited choices (two or three) for a child in a difficult situation can be a powerful strategy in preventing challenging behavior and redirecting a child to more acceptable behavior and cooperation. Choices help give children a sense of control over their surroundings and activities while still doing what needs to be done! Be sure that ALL the choices you offer are helping reach that goal! For example, if it is time to get dressed ask your child if she wants to get dressed by herself or with your help.

★ **Provide frequent and specific praise.** Let your child know when she is being cooperative and helpful by praising her specifically for what she is doing. For example, you might give your child a high five for sitting quietly in the car or you might say, "Thank you for holding my hand in the parking lot."

★ **Empathize with your child's feelings.** If your child cries, hits, bites, screams or hides, provide an emotional label for how she might be feeling and reassure her. Avoid punishment (e.g. "If you don't sit still, I am going to spank you.") and negative, and usually, untrue comments "Big girls don't cry" or "There is nothing to be afraid of." Let your child cry and comfort her by hugging, patting and/or using a soothing touch.

Tip: Prepare family and friends.

Inform family and friends of helpful strategies. Talk to your family and friends about strategies that might help ensure your child's success before spending time together. Consider specific aspects or situations that might have a negative impact on your child's behavior (e.g., sensory issues, difficulty waiting, food allergies or sensitivities, etc.) and share strategies that have worked for you. Be sure to focus on your child's strengths and strategies for success.



Tip: Pack for success!



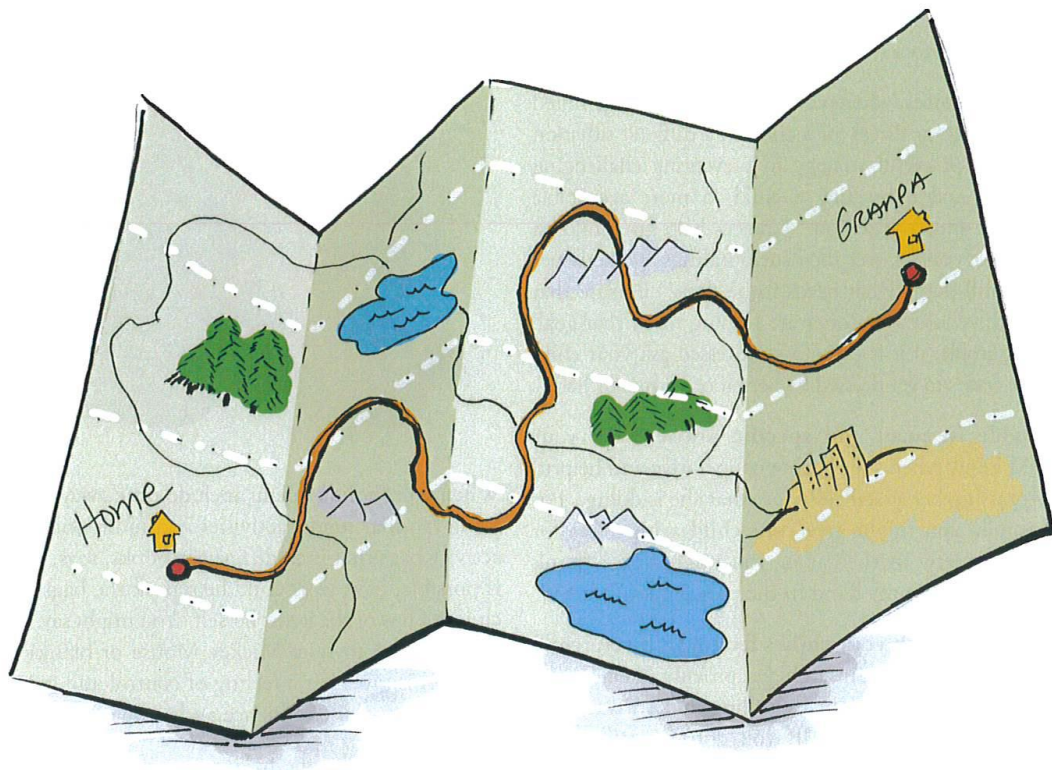
When your holiday plans include time away from home, bring familiar items, activities and foods with you. Pack activity bags that include favorite books, toys, and games. If possible, have your child help pack the bags so she can choose a few of the items herself. You might say, "Brianna, do you want to take Mickey Mouse or blankie in your bag?" This gives her a feeling of control and supports her growing sense of confidence and sense of competency.

For many families the holidays are a time of feasting and enjoying all kinds of yummy treats. Be attentive to diet changes and how they may affect your child. Chocolate, caffeine, sugar, and dairy products may have an impact of your child's digestion, well-being, and behavior. If your child follows a particular diet, be sure to bring items with you that might not be available where you are going. Pack nutritious food and drink options to balance out sweet, holiday treats.

Tip: Pre-travel planning.

★ **Reassure your child.** Let your child know that you will be with her and that she can take along a favorite toy or blanket. For example you might say, "Daddy will be with you" or "You can hold blankie on the plane."

★ **Rest stops aren't just for resting.** Familiarize yourself with your travel route as well as with parks and rest areas along the way. These offer great opportunities for children to run, jump, play with a ball, blow bubbles, and stretch. Many family-friendly restaurants and airports have play spaces also. A good rule is to take a ten minute break every two hours.



★ **Create a personal picture story about the trip.**

Create a small book with photos of the airport and plane or of the bus depot, bus, car or train. As you read the book with your child, let her know what will happen and how you expect her to behave. Read this to your child several times before the trip. Also, make sure to bring it along as a reminder. When children understand what is going to happen, they are less anxious which can increase cooperation and reduce challenging behavior.

Tip: Celebrate the successes along the way.

In closing, please remember that the team of professionals that support you and your child will have additional

specific ideas about how to help your child. Don't forget to ask them! Your child's speech and language therapist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, teacher, or other professional should be able to help you think about the best way to support your child over the holiday season. They are usually more than willing to help you make any needed specific supports (for example, a Travel Book, a Waiting Bag, a personal picture story, etc.). If your child is having persistent challenging behavior, you should ask the professionals who work with you to help develop a behavior support plan that will provide more specific strategies to prevent challenging behavior and help your child develop new social and communication skills.

Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children

www.challengingbehavior.org



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