

# St John XXIII Pre-K DYNAMITE DINOS' NEWSLETTER MAY, 2018



April,  
What can we say, time does not wait for anyone!!!!  
We gardened all April, hopefully your child's plants are growing at home. Our garden is starting to come up, both classes are excited to count the plants as they sprout. So far the afternoon class's plants are coming up more quickly!  
The children are getting pretty good at categorizing during attendance and at centers. We have been having so much fun playing, and exploring magnets, we've been checking which objects are metal with magnets.  
Thank-you to all parents who were able to join us at the John Janzen Center, the children learned so much about animal tracks, camouflage and finding where the insects were.  
What can you design with, popsicle sticks of all sizes, rocks, flowers and wood pieces? Beautiful camping spots, gardens, bridges, boats and paths! Wow! Your children are getting so creative and are loving using their imagination!  
Thanks to one of our morning children, we have all been enjoying the Elephant and Piggy books. We have had some great conversations about feeling left out and how we can join a group.  
May, we will be looking at community helpers and Mother's day (More info at the end of the newsletter).

To let us know of your child's illness/absence or to discuss your child's program, please contact Ms. Sue Dexter and call the school office.  
Office Phone: (780) 998-7777  
Ms. Sue Dexter  
Email: [susand@eics.ab.ca](mailto:susand@eics.ab.ca)



Birthdays this Month:

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SEND  
CUPCAKES OR A TREAT FOR YOUR  
CHILD'S BIRTHDAY.

Charlie - May 6

Carter - May 17

Ella - May 22

Keep reading!

There are lots of pictures of  
the kids in this month's  
Newsletter!!

# FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

Please let us know if you will be attending any or all field trips, the children really enjoy being together in different environments and these trips expose your children to different services in their community.

May 9, @ 9:30 to 11:30 at the school. Sorry for the late notice

Mother's Day- spa and fun day

May 9, @ 9:30 to 11:30 at the school. Moms please bring your sense of humor and come spend some fun time with your child☺

-just so you know, there will be leg baring, face handling and hair combing! I can't tell you more, be ready to laugh and play.

We are so excited to laugh and enjoy you and your children. I sincerely hope you enjoy your special day.

May 16 @10:00 to 11:30, we will meet at the front doors at 9:45

Visit to the RCMP station

200 Town Crest Road

Constable Suzanne Ahlstrom, will lead us on tour of the station.

May 23 @ 9:30 to 11:00, we will meet at the office at 9:15

Visit to Prairie Gardens- The children will be able to transplant a flower and take it home, go on a train ride, pet the animals, have a cookie and drink.

Please let us know who will be attending and send in the field trip fee by May 14<sup>th</sup>, thank-you.

Plants & Animals on the Farm (1.5 hours guided tour) \$11.00/person plus GST

Driving Directions From Fort Saskatchewan to Prairie Gardens - Driving Time 22 minutes

- Merge onto HWY-15 W. 3.3 km
- Turn right onto HWY-37. 4.1 km
- Turn right onto HWY-28A N. 14.5 km

- Merge onto HWY-28 S toward Bon Accord & Edmonton 6 km
- Turn right onto Lily Lake Road (Range Road 235). Go 2 km. Entrance on right.

May 30@ 10:00 to 11:30, we will meet at EGGCELLENT P'EATS restaurant

9908-103 Street Fort Saskatchewan

The children will be making a treat in a restaurant, using the restaurant's tools (they are a lot bigger than the ones at home)! No charge

Canuk Plumbing

May 30@ 11:30 to 1:00, we will walk over after Pete's, it next door! No charge

The children will look at different materials, tools that a plumbing company uses. They will explore different weights and sizes of pipes, bolts and nuts. This will be a hands on and active trip.

June 6 @ 10:00 to 11:30 we will meet at Nitza's Pizza, donation to the Stollery Children's Hospital

10 Ridgemont Way Sherwood Park

The children will tour, make their own pizza and have ice cream all in a real restaurant! What child does not like pizza??

Sherwood Veterinarian Clinic, Dr Matta no charge

June 6 @ 11:30 to 1:00, we will walk over after Nitza's, it's in the same lot.

We will tour the Vet Clinic, Dr Matta will perform "surgery" on a stuffy!



June 9<sup>th</sup> Father's Day, more information to follow.



# Some fun pictures from April!

JOHN JANTZEN CENTER- THE SIGNS OF SPRING!!!!



STRANGE CREATURES THAT CALL THE CENTER HOME!



TALKING ABOUT HOW ANIMALS SAVE FOOD FOR THE WINTER AND CAMOUFLAGE!  
SEAN YOU SHOULDN'T WEAR A RED HAT WHEN YOU ARE HIDING. ☺



MAKING MAPS TO FIND OUR PAL IN HAWAII!





MAKING SPRING FLOWERS



EXPLORING MAGNETS



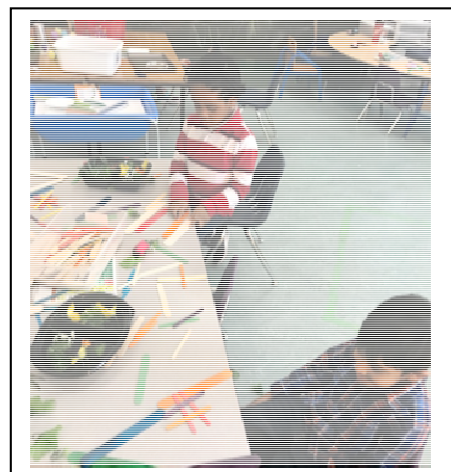
BEAUTIFUL PAINTED



SEEDING OUR GARDEN, FUTURE GARDENERS



PETAL





**THE CHALLENGE- BUILD SOMETHING PEOPLE CAN LIVE IN. CHALLENGE SUCCESSFUL!**





A STORY OF FRIENDS, A FEW POPSICLE STICKS, ROCKS, FLOWERS AND BLOCKS, AND HOW THEY BECAME SOMETHING SPECIAL!!!

# News from the Classroom

Sue Dexter: [susand@eics.ab.ca](mailto:susand@eics.ab.ca)



## IMPORTANT DATES:

May 30, June 5 and 7<sup>th</sup> ISP conferences, more information to follow.

**Please read your child's agenda daily, this is our communication between home and school. There may be information on upcoming events or forms to sign eg. FOP reports. Also initial any notes in your child's agendas, that way we know you've read the notes, thank-you.**

### Children with PUF funding:

As part of your child's Program Unit Funded programming you have agreed to participate in 10 FOPs per school year. We know it isn't always easy to get away for the morning and after school sessions. If you are having trouble scheduling a FOP please contact Sue Dexter after 4:00 p.m. to make alternative arrangements.

PUF programming is audited every year by Alberta Education. We lose funding if we do not meet all of Alberta Education's criteria; one of which is parent participation in Family Oriented Programming - FOPs. This affects our ability to provide Teacher, EA, SLP, OT, and other supports for your child.

Your cooperation and participation in FOPs is vital.

Thank you!

Please remember to **LABEL** all coats, hats, shoes, boots, mitts and snow pants with your child's name.

**FUN FORK FRIDAYS-** please send a snack that your children need to use a fork to eat and send a fork. Thank-you



# Occupational Therapy Corner

## Visual Perceptual & Skills

Consider visual perception as an umbrella term which consists of many sub skills.

It is the body's ability to organize and interpret information that is seen and give it meaning. These information-processing skills include figure-ground, form constancy, spatial relations, visual closure, visual discrimination, visual memory, and visualization.

## Visual Discrimination

Is the ability to determine differences or similarities in objects or forms based on size, color, shape, etc. ***The Real life application:*** For the tasks of reading and writing, visual discrimination is critical for seeing letters or words as different. Difficulties in this skill area can make "p" look a lot like "q" or "the" look a lot like "then".

## Form Constancy

Is the ability to know that a form or shape is the same, even if it has been rotated, made smaller/larger, or observed from up close or far away. ***The Real life application:*** Form constancy is important for recognizing letters or words in different contexts. For example, a child must know that the word "the" is the same whether they see it written in a text book, on a marker board, or in a magazine article.

## Visual Memory

Is the ability to recall visual traits of a form or object. ***The Real life application:*** Visual memory is important for reading comprehension. A child has to remember what they read and recognize a word from one page to the next. Difficulties with this skill can also make copying from a board or book so much more challenging. These children might take forever to copy an assignment because they can't retain the information to transfer it from the board to their own page.

## Visual Sequential Memory

Is the ability to recall a sequence of objects or forms in the correct order. ***The Real life application:*** Visual Sequential memory is very important for spelling & patterning. Some children might know the letters in a word or pattern, but can't get their order correct.



## Visual Closure

Is the ability to recognize a form or object even when the whole picture of it isn't available. ***The Real life application:*** This means you can see a part of something and fill in the rest in your head. Visual closure is important for reading and comprehending what we see quickly. Difficulty with this skill might mean that a child has to study a word or sentence carefully before they know what it is.

## Visual Spatial Relations

Is the ability to understand the relationships of objects within the environment. ***The Real life application:*** Visual spatial skills can be important in gross motor terms. Think of the direction, "Go put your shoes under your desk, and then come stand in front of the water fountain." The child must understand how to maneuver within their environment by following those spatial commands. That whole left/right concept plays a big part in this skill as well. ***In fine motor terms,*** visual spatial relations are important for appropriate letter orientation and avoiding reversals. After all, "b" and "d" are essentially the same shape, just pointing in different directions.

## Visual Figure Ground

Is the ability to locate something in a cluttered or busy background. ***The Real life application:*** Figure ground skills allow you to find an AAA battery in the junk drawer. A child must be able to sort out visual information to find what they are looking for. Difficulties with this skill can leave kids lost as they look for specific information on a busy worksheet.

## Activities to Strengthen your Visual Perceptual Skills:

- 1) Sorting shapes, numbers or letters- either on a page or using actual objects
- 2) Matching Games
- 3) Puzzles
- 4) I Spy games- both in books or board games or just with their eyes
- 5) Where is Waldo type games (hidden pictures)- looking for something in a busy background
- 6) Sorting Games- find something in a drawer, sorting laundry
- 7) Doing mazes
- 8) Copying shapes or letters
- 9) Tracing

Great ideas can be found at this website: <http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/visual-perception-activities.html>

# Let's Talk About Speech and Language



Ellen Bailey: [ellenb@eics.ab.ca](mailto:ellenb@eics.ab.ca)

This month's article is taken from the Hanen website...a great place for parents to find more information on how to help your child communicate. Here is the link...[Hanen website](#)



## Study Reports That Conversations Are Key to Language Development

*By Lauren Lowry*

*Hanen Certified Speech Language Pathologist and Hanen Staff Member*

"Just talk to your baby - he just needs to hear you speak. Speak to him every chance you get – while you cook dinner, fold the laundry, or change his diaper." This advice is often given by well-meaning individuals when parents have their first baby. While providing good language input to a young child is important, a one-sided running commentary isn't very helpful at all, according to an article from Science Daily in July 2009.

Researchers from the University of California, Los Angeles sought to determine the key factors that contribute to a child's language development. Studying 275 families of young children (ages 0-4), they recorded the adult speech, child speech, and television within the child's environment, and looked at the effect each of these had on the child's language development. They found the following:

- Back-and-forth conversation contributed the most to the child's future language score (six times more so than adult speech alone)
- Adult monologuing (one-sided conversation, such as reading a book to a child without the child's participation) was more weakly linked to language development
- TV viewing has no effect on language development (neither positive nor negative)

These results highlight the need to engage children in back-and-forth conversation. Adult speech alone, such as talking to a child without encouraging the child to participate in the conversation, is not as helpful as some might advise.

## Hanen's views on the news

This study confirms the approach utilized in Hanen Programs, in which interaction between children and caregivers is promoted with the goal of promoting two-sided conversation. The following Hanen principles and strategies ensure that two-way conversation happens:

### Respond to nonverbal communication

A conversation doesn't have to involve talking! Children learn the basics of conversation well before they learn to talk. When children take turns while interacting, they are building their conversation skills. Therefore, when a child looks, reaches, gestures, makes a sound or uses facial expression, treat this as a conversational turn and respond to keep the conversation going!

#### ► Encourage children to initiate conversation

The best way to encourage a child to initiate conversation is to stop talking yourself. The principle of Observe, Wait, and Listen (a strategy found in all Hanen Programs) encourages caregivers to pause (without speaking) and give the child an opportunity to initiate an idea during motivating situations and routines. It is difficult to Observe, Wait and Listen, and it requires a conscious effort not to talk or direct the child. However, if you count to 10 without speaking or doing anything, you will be giving your child a chance to initiate.



### ► **Keep the conversation going: Encourage children to take turns during conversation**

You can keep the conversation going by making comments about what your child is interested in or communicating about and not asking too many questions. For example, if your child is fascinated by a barking dog, you can say "That dog is barking! Maybe he wants to go for a walk" (comment) vs "What's the dog doing?" (question to which you know the answer).

A balance of comments related to the child's interests and genuine questions (that don't test the child) will keep the conversation going. Questions that test the child, are too difficult or don't relate to the child's focus at that moment are conversation stoppers.

### ► **Make story time interactive**

Instead of reading a book from start to finish, use books as a topic for conversation. After reading a page or part of a page in a book, wait for the child to initiate an idea. Then, provide a response based on the child's idea. Or, skip the text and just talk about the pictures. In this way, story time becomes conversation time.

### ► **Don't rely on the television to teach language**

Passive television viewing does not promote a child's language skills. Sitting with your child and talking about his favourite TV show or character or about a theme explored on a TV show will do more to build his language skills.

## **In summary...**

The key to promoting children's language competence is encouraging them to engage in conversations. This principle is at the very foundation of Hanen Programs®. "Conversation" doesn't just mean talking. For children who aren't yet talking, it means encouraging them to initiate and take turns during interactions by sending nonverbal messages. To quote Dr. Jill Gilkerson, co-author of the UCLA study, "Talk is powerful, but what's even more powerful is engaging a child in meaningful interactions – the 'give and take' that is so important to the social, emotional, and cognitive development of infants and toddlers".

This approach to talking to and interacting with a child comes from The Hanen Centre's *It Takes Two to Talk*® (Pepper and Weitzman), a practical guidebook for parents who are concerned about their child's language development.

To find out more about how Hanen can help you build your child's language development, [click here](#).

## **References**

University of California - Los Angeles. "Conversing Helps Language Development More Than Reading Alone." *ScienceDaily* 17 July 2009.

## **Mrs. Bailey's CONCEPTS OF THE MONTH:**

Early Learners: **SLOW** and **FAST**: These are fun words to play with!! You can sing songs fast or slow and walk fast or slow! The ideas are endless!! Remember that kids usually learn to understand words before they can use them. Talk about how different animals move around; snails move slowly and horses can run fast!! Most kids love playing with cars, trucks and trains; next time you are playing with your child exaggerate the difference between a fast car and a slow car. Ask your child if you should sing their favorite song fast or slow! Move is slow motion and see if your child can do the same. Enjoy time with your child while you talk about these concepts and repeat the words often.

Older Kids: **BEFORE** and **AFTER**: Getting ready for Kindergarten? The language level in a Kindergarten classroom can be difficult for some kids. Teachers give lots of instructions like "Before you sit down, give me your name tags" "Check the board before you go to centres" or "Come and see me after you finish your page". Prepare your child for these type of instructions by practicing in a fun way. These concepts are easier to understand when they are used in a natural order (i.e. "brush your teeth before you go to bed" – they aren't going to brush their teeth after they go to bed!!) See how your child does when the order is not so obvious....while building with blocks, you could say "Use a green block after you put on a red block" or "before you give me a blue block, pass me a red block". Use these words often during daily routines "I am going to clean my glasses BEFORE I put them on" or ask your child when they want to go for a walk "Should we go for a walk before we eat or after we eat?" AFTER all.....BEFORE you know it.....your child will be in Kindergarten!!

## Thought for the month...



Our thought for the month.....

### MAY, HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY



If parents have ideas they would like to share or topics they are interested in for our "Thought of the Month," please email Sue by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.



# Our team



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EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT



SUE DEXTER, TEACHER



ROXANNE KELLOGG  
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EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT



Ellen Bailey  
SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST

END