



PRACTICAL PARENTING PARTNERSHIPS
Working Together for Our Children

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EARLY CHILDHOOD

by Janet Shepard, Director

[The Week of the Young Child](#) and this issue of the PPP newsletter are launching together. *Early Years are Learning Years* is the theme for this fortieth Week of the Young Child. Schools and programs serving children and families at all ages and stages are wise to embrace the importance of early learning and support. It is where primary prevention begins.

Regular school attendance, a high quality education provided by qualified educators, and family and community engagement are foundational to school success at any level pre-K through college graduation. Only by working as a team providing seamless services with relentless commitment will we guarantee a successful educational experience for all of our students and their families.

Nationally the interest in Pre-K has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years. Funding issues may have created a set back in services, but not in the commitment to the importance of early education. To learn more about the national movement and to track changes, visit the [Pre-K Now website](#).

Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is changing their definition of early childhood to include children through the age of eight. They are also revising the early learning standards and accepting public comment on the work which has been completed to date. To learn more about what is happening in Missouri and to share your opinions, check the [DESE website](#). Practical Parenting Partnerships will continue to expand its role in assisting with family engagement at the Pre-K level .

PPP CENTER UPDATE

by Janet Shepard, Director

Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has launched the Top 10 By 20 Campaign to place Missouri in the top ten states in education rankings by the year 2020. They are asking all Missourians to join together to work toward achieving the goal. You will find details and promotional materials on the [DESE website](#). PPP encourages you to share this information with parents and community members!

PPP is currently scheduling work for the 2011-12 school year. Please let us know how we can assist you in implementing your school and personal professional development plans. We will continue to offer Implementation, Home Visiting, Kindergarten Transition, and PPP for School-Age Care trainings around the state and by invitation in your district or community. We will also provide on-site professional development and family workshops. Shelly has worked with a number of districts this year assisting teams of teachers and / or parents in preparing and presenting family workshops.

- A tip of the PPP umbrella this month to the following schools and programs for utilizing PPP resources:
- Genesis School in Kansas City for ordering *Parents Guide to Grade Level Assessment*

- Affton Primary for scheduling a PPP technical assistance in planning family reading workshops. They worked with Shelly who created a new family reading night for them
- Non-Public Title I parent workshops in Kansas City and St Louis
- Missouri – PIRC in Springfield for hosting PPP Home Visit Training in April

Thanks for your continued support!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April is [Child Abuse Prevention Month](#)
 Month of the Military Child

April 10 – 16	Week of the Young Child National Volunteers Week
15	Go Blue Day
19	Home Visit Training – Springfield MO
21	Show Me Prevention Day
May 2-8	Children’s Book Week

KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION

By Janet Shepard, Director

Recently a mother shared her concern about spring screening and kindergarten registration activities. Certainly the transition team at her daughter’s new school was well intentioned in providing screening and registration in the spring for the upcoming school year.

What resulted for this child was a great deal of anxiety about kindergarten. The child was frightened by spending time without her mother and with strangers for the screening time. The child found the registration process to be frightening and it caused her to worry all summer whether school would also be frightening.

While this is the story and experience of one child, it serves as a good reminder that parents need information prior to screening so they can help their child be ready for what will happen. It is also a good reminder that one glimpse of the school is not enough.

No matter our age and experience, new experiences can be a little scary. As adults we typically want as much information as possible before we begin something new such teaching at a different school or beginning a new curriculum. Children also need lots of information. This might be a locally created picture book or DVD of the new school, classroom and staff. It might be offering several opportunities to visit the school over the summer. Letters, phone calls or home visits from the teacher are helpful to children and parents, too.

PPP training and coaching can help you with transition planning. Give us a call if we can be of assistance to you!

HOME VISITING NATIONAL SUMMIT

By Janet Shepard, Director

In February the first national summit for home visiting was convened in Washington, D.C. You will find the agenda, conference proceedings and the presenter’s slides at the conference site <http://www.homevisitingsummit2011.org> .

Many of the presenters and organizations at the conference will be familiar to those who have attended PPP home visit training. The folks at this conference are the experts whose work we reviewed in creating our training manual. Barbara Wasik from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was a presenter and I think you will find her presentation to be useful whether you are just starting to make home visits or whether looking for a refresher. Dr Wasik's presentation is [Home Visiting: A Multifaceted Approach to Program Quality](#).

We have one remaining session of PPP Home Visit Training this school year. It will be in Springfield on April 19 and will be hosted by our Missouri-PIRC partner in Springfield at the Burrell Behavioral Health Center. Please mail, fax or call your [registration](#) in by April 15. We are also scheduling for the 2011-12 school year. Please let us know if you would like to see this training offered in your area next year. We will bring the training to you if you have ten people or if you have five people and need a set of resource materials.

SPOTLIGHT ON GREENFIELD R-IV FAMILY NIGHT!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY DR. SEUSS!!!

On Wednesday, March 2, 2011, Greenfield Elementary teachers and students celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday!! As students entered the building that morning they were greeted by teachers wearing Cat in the Hat hats and decorations everywhere. Each student in school was given a Dr. Seuss pencil and sticker. Teachers and students read Dr. Seuss books and played games and completed activities that included learning and enjoyment. Kindergarteners and sixth graders discovered they do like green eggs and ham!! First graders made graphs with their feet and created a glyph. Second graders made oobleck or decorated fish for their Venn diagram. They made a class book with each student telling whether they thought oobleck was a solid or liquid and why. Students in third grade wrote their own tongue twisters or did the math to figure out how old Dr. Seuss would be today. Fourth graders read many books, graphed the class favorites, and wrote their own adaptation of I Saw It On Mulberry Street. Students in fifth grade wrote a class adaptation of Hooray For Diffendoofer Day. Sixth grade students also enjoyed reading Bartholomew and the Oobleck and making oobleck.



The celebration continued into the evening as Title I staff and teachers hosted a Reading Fair and birthday party in honor of Dr. Seuss. As Mrs. McDowell greeted the crowd and opened the doors at ten minutes before six o'clock the line of excited children and parents raced to the check-in table, with no end in sight! Approximately 400 people including 170 Greenfield Elementary students, and 230 parents, grandparents, friends and siblings came to celebrate the importance of reading and Dr. Seuss' birthday.

The evening began in the elementary gym as parents and students were welcomed. Mrs. Daniel shared that her favorite Dr. Seuss book was *Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?*, a book that she received when she was five years old from a special aunt and uncle, and a book that her mother knows by heart from reading it so many times. Everyone was reminded "how lucky they are" because they have parents who enjoy reading to them, with them, and being read to by them.



After receiving instructions for the games and activities – the games began! Students and parents enjoyed playing lots of fun games that focused on reading and writing activities all with a Dr. Seuss theme. Games included: Seuss Your Name; Bean Bag Toss; Book Walk; Puzzle Race; Relay Trivia;

Story in a Box; Pin the Egg on the Plate; Story Stretchers; Face Painting!!

A special appearance by The Cat in the Hat and Thing One and Thing Two were the highlight of the evening, bringing to life the world of Dr. Seuss.

In the middle of the evening the games were interrupted to bring the birthday cake to the stage. The Cat in the Hat accompanied by Thing One and Thing Two sang along with the crowd as they wished Dr. Seuss a Happy, Happy Birthday.

Birthday cake and “pink ink” were served in the cafeteria. Some lucky students had their names drawn to take home door prizes. Everyone had a great time and even when all the cake was gone; parents and children alike didn’t seem to care. As several parents said, “it’s no big deal, they have had a great time all night “. Thanks for being so understanding. Students who attended received goodie bags and activity books. This was the biggest event Greenfield Elementary has seen in a long time. A big THANK YOU goes out to faculty, staff, and friends that worked that evening, but an even bigger THANK YOU to the parents for bringing your children.

Special recognition was given the next day at school to the classrooms with the largest percentage of students attending the party. Each of these classrooms received a special light up Cat in the Hat pointer!

PPP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN PLANNING FAMILY NIGHTS!

by Shelly Lock, Program Development Coordinator

PPP and schools can partner for success in planning family nights. Invite PPP to come on site and help you plan an amazing experience for your students and their families as well as your staff. Bringing families in for a fun night together can build and strengthen relationships between home and school, connect parents with other parents for support, give parents strategies for working with their children at home, and give staff an opportunity to reach all families. PPP can bring in pre-planned family nights, brainstorm with you to plan a night together, and provide a multitude of resources to enhance your activity. The cost is \$500 which is inclusive of travel, time, and basic materials for some of the workshops.

Here’s feedback received from our featured school this month, Greenfield R-IV: “I wanted to write to let you know what a HUGE success our Reading Fair was. Normally a large turn out for our parent involvement nights are 5 to 10 families, the largest meeting was 36 families in the last three years!! Our Reading Fair included 170 elementary students (our enrollment is 245) and 232 parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles!! Total was 402 people not including the 18 teachers who volunteered to help, the three teachers who organized it, and the parents, extra helpers, newspaper photographer and administration that did not sign the sign in sheet!!!!!! It was totally awesome!! Of course, we had cake (which we ran out of!) and the Cat in the Hat and Thing One and Thing Two made an appearance, so I am sure that they attracted some people for us! But, it was truly amazing, and so much fun! Emphasized by the fact that the games were easy to set up and tear down making preparation and clean-up a cinch!! All we did was add some balloons for decoration!! Thank you a million times over PPP for all your help!!!!!!”

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Volunteering in School

By Shelly Lock, Program Development Coordinator

April 10-16, 2011 is National Volunteer Week! Why volunteer in your child's school? The answers are numerous. First and foremost, research shows that when their parents are involved in their education (and in their school), children do better in school. Schools benefit from the commitment of volunteers who are working together with them to offer quality education for children. Volunteers themselves also benefit! Here are ten benefits to volunteers:

1. Able to see direct results of their efforts
2. Gain new appreciation and understanding of the school
3. Develop or enhance personal skills; find venue for sharing their special skills
4. Meet others with similar values and goals; network and make new friends
5. Find satisfaction in being part of a team and in being a role model
6. Satisfy a basic human need: giving of oneself
7. Know more about their children's education experience
8. Employers often look for volunteer experiences on resumes
9. Be seen by others as a resource
10. Be healthier! A study at Cornell found that people involved in volunteer work tend to live longer and be less likely to suffer major illnesses.

How can you volunteer in your child's school? There are various ways to get involved and things to keep in mind as you consider how you might help. You may or may not be available during the school day. You may or may not be able to go to the school to volunteer. You have things you are most comfortable in helping with. You have your own strengths and skills you can offer. Here are possible services volunteers can perform.

In the School

Library volunteers

Assisting in lunchroom and playground

Registration of pre-k, kindergarten and first grade children

Assisting at beginning of day and at dismissal time

Collecting and counting money

Distributing material in teachers' letter boxes

Planning and supervising special grade-level activities

Making posters

Setting up hall display cases

Clerical chores

Helping with inventories of books and supplies

Taking charge of maintaining and setting up audiovisual equipment

Organizing and operating a school reading center

Assisting in school programs: drama, art music, assemblies

In the Classroom

Assisting young children with coats and outside gear

Assisting in house hold chores, like watering plants, organizing art supplies

Distributing materials and supplies

Putting work on chalkboard

Obtaining designated materials for class units of study from library or other sources

Compiling a picture file for study units
Documenting class work through taking photos and organizing them
Setting up simple science experiments
Reading to a small group
Reviewing special drills in math, spelling, etc. with small group or with individual
Providing special help to identified students in basic skills areas
Listening to individual students read

From Home

Designing a web page or writing a newsletter
Preparing bulletin board or special project materials
Making phone calls to other parents

Identify volunteer services you might be interested in helping with (from the list or other ideas you come up with) and then check with your child's school administrator or teachers to see if they need assistance in those areas. School volunteers show a strong commitment to educating children and providing special attention that can inspire students to reach for their dreams.

The Parent Page is prepared by Practical Parenting Partnerships for distribution by schools to family and community members.