

What's been happening?

The children have learned so much by this time of year—it is amazing to see how much more they can do now! The kindergartners can read so many words, are writing their own books and are very motivated to try more and new things. The pre Ks do not stay behind—they also want to read and write and they do it magnificently, beyond their level.

The month of March has moved from cold winter into blooming spring, and you can see this everywhere in the Sunshine Room, from the beautiful art work inspired by famous artists, to the piles of books authored by the Sunshine Room children, to the examples of neat handwriting, to the interested scientists, and the engaged mathematicians. Not to mention the singing, dancing and drama through which children also express themselves on a daily basis—AND in addition to their learning of Spanish and the great friendships they have made.

The big celebration of the month was St. Patrick's Day (a.k.a., Olivia's birthday!). A big highlight of the day was when Sydney, Jake's sister, came dressed in her Irish dancing costume and performed two dances for us. How she danced! Afterwards she invited the children to join her, and taught them some steps, to their great delight. Thank you so much Sydney!



Language Arts

Kindergarten

Much of this month has been devoted to the review of sight words and learning about punctuation marks and how they are used. We also worked on sight words, identifying colors, and building words and rhymes. We had a couple of game days that reinforced these skills. The children work cooperatively to help each other understand and master these skills.

The children understand what periods, exclamation points, question marks, commas and quotation marks are. They are able to identify when a statement is exciting, when someone is asking a question and when someone is speaking—by looking at the punctuation marks. The next step is to implement this in their writing. We will continue reviewing punctuation, along with phonics and sight words, to make sure the children have a concrete understanding.

The week of St. Patrick's Day we read a couple of stories about St. Patrick and why he was an important figure in Irish history, as well as books relating to rainbows and the science lesson of the week. We also briefly discussed some subtopics in these books such as road safety, transportation, healthy foods and diversity.

Pre-K

The Spotted Kittens finished working on vowel sounds. We made a mystery box with all of the vowels and identified which object had which short vowel sounds. Then the children did a cutting and pasting activity, which is a great way for them to develop their fine motor skills. The children had to match upper-case letters with lower-case letters by cutting the upper-case letters and pasting them next to their corresponding lower-case letters. Ms. Kristin also did a little informal assessment with them to see if they recognized the name and sound of each letter in the alphabet.

During the week of St. Patrick's Day we read a couple of stories about St. Patrick and why he was an important figure in Irish history, as well as books relating to rainbows and the science lesson of the week. These books also included nice lessons about road safety, transportation, fruits and vegetables, and diversity, so those topics were discussed as well. The children drew pictures of what they learned from these books.

Announcements

Welcome to Evan W., who will be joining the Pre K Spotted Kittens in April!

March Birthdays

Olivia

Zoe

Book Fair

April 12, 13, 14



Shows at 4:30

- Monday, April 12: The Bald Eagles will each read a book they wrote and sing Spanish songs
- Tuesday, April 13: The Spotted Kittens will read a book written by the class and sing Spanish songs
- Wednesday, April 14: The Rainbow Butterflies will each read a book they wrote and sing Spanish songs

Art

What a month for art in the Sunshine Room! We started March off by learning about the life and artwork of artist Wassily Kandinsky. Kandinsky was not only a talented artist but a musician as well. Kandinsky liked painting to music. If he painted to sad, slow music, he would use the colors blue, green and purple. If he painted to happy/fast music, he would use the colors red, yellow and orange. We decided to try and make our own “Kandinsky Color Study Painting” by painting to happy and sad music. We then displayed all of the students’ “color studies” together as one big bulletin board.

Next, the Sunshine Roomers celebrated a most special birthday, DR. SEUSS’s! In honor of Mr. Seuss’s birthday, we all made our own versions of the Cat in the Hat’s hat. The Sunshine Roomers also learned about the life and artwork of Claude Monet. We read the book, *Philippe in Monet’s Garden* and learned about a fictional frog that lived in France and was saved by Monet. Philippe was running away from frog catchers who wanted his legs for dinner and Monet let Philippe live in his water lily garden. We decided to make our own water lily paintings by making a mono print of our pond (using Plexiglas and tempera paint.) Students then used tissue paper and drew their very own Philippe to live in their own individual water lily gardens.

We are devoting the end of the month to learn about the artwork and life of Pablo Picasso. The children are learning about the artist’s Blue and Rose Periods, and how using certain colors can create a feeling or mood in a painting. The students choose either pink or blue to paint their paintings!

The Spotted Kittens learned about how Eric Carle makes his book illustrations and we decided to do the same by painting tissue paper and making sea creatures based on the book *Mr. Seahorse* by Eric Carle. They are on view now in the Sunshine Room.

Other March art projects: St. Patrick’s Day mosaics and shamrock cards and an art project about money, including a cash register, bills, and coins.

Thank you, as always, to all the families that donate art supplies and recycled materials to the Sunshine Room! We cannot wait to show you what we make with all the donated goodies! Happy spring and see you in April.

Drama

We began the month by dramatizing the plays the children prepared in language arts class in honor of Dr. Seuss's birthday, and using the tall hats they made in art class. It was wonderful to see how it all came together, and how fun it was.

After that, the plays became more complex: The teacher read aloud scripts of plays for known stories such as *The North Wind and the Sun* and *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*. The class discussed the story and talked about what they learned from it. Finally, they all talked about the different emotions the different characters convey and the emphasis they must put into how they speak. The children chose the part they wanted to play and, if there was enough time, the play was performed several times.

For St. Patrick's Day, the children listened to the story *Clever Tom and the Leprechaun* and dramatized it.



Science



In science this month, we discussed all things precipitation related! We began by learning about why it rains and snows. The children learned the terms "evaporation" and "water vapor" by reading the book, *Why Does it Rain?* As a fun sensory activity, the children made their very own snow by mixing water with a fine powder that, when wet, expands to 100 times its size and resembles snow! The children observed that, when the ingredients were combined, the "snow" initially felt warm, but eventually cooled! How interesting!

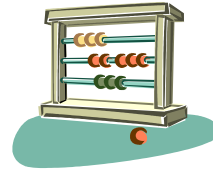
In recognition of Saint Patrick's Day and to expand on the previous rain lesson, the children learned all about rainbows. They began by learning a song to help them recall the seven colors: violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. Perhaps you heard them singing it around the house! Next, the children listened to the book, *What are Rainbows?* They learned the term "prism" and how, when white light shines through a prism, it bends the light, dividing it into the seven colors of the rainbow. To test what we learned in the book, the children created their very own prism using water, a mirror and a flashlight. They observed the reflection of the flashlight's bright light as a rainbow, which was reflected onto a white piece of paper held by one of the children. The children noted that they only saw certain colors show up on the paper and that the rainbow was VERY small. They each drew a picture of what they observed. To end the lesson, they played the game "I Spy" in which Ms. Randi secretly spotted objects with one each of the rainbow's colors and had the children try to guess which objects she was thinking of!

Finally, the children reviewed the primary and secondary colors. Ms. Randi thought it would be interesting to mix primary colors to create secondary colors, and then reverse the process. The children used food coloring to watch primary colors combine to make secondary colors. Next, they used a dropper to transfer the new colors onto coffee filters. Finally, the coffee filters were dipped in water so that the children could observe the colors separating!

Handwriting



This month, all the kindergarten children finished learning to write all the lowercase letters! They were all very pleased to reach such a milestone! The final lowercase letters taught were m, h, b, x and z. For the final time, the children used the lined chalkboards from the *Handwriting Without Tears* program to help them to properly size their letters. Next, each group created a list of words that reminded them of spring. The words were then written onto lined *Handwriting Without Tears* paper to help them to further practice their lowercase letters (by copying a model provided on the paper). A fill-in-the-missing-letter game was performed at the end of class to allow extended practice of uppercase letters. As we move forward, a different writing game will conclude each class.



Math

The children have enjoyed playing with the cash registers since the beginning of the school year. When it was time for the kindergartners to learn about money, their teacher decided to spend extra time on the subject. The children looked at the differences between the different coins in color, size and appearance. They learned about heads and tails. Finally they learned the differences in value. Using the book *Jelly Beans for Sale* was a great way to introduce this very subject. The children also made classifications using play coins, and examined real coins. The following week, the children learned about dollar bills and their different values. In the book, *Pigs Will Be Pigs*, a family of pigs looks all over their house for money to buy food. While the story was being read, as the pigs in the story found money in the house, the Sunshine Roomers had fun keeping a tally of it with their play bills or coins.

The next subject in math class was Time. The children began learning about the times of the day related to daylight and the activities they do. Then they learned about the days of the week, the months of the year, and made their own monthly calendars for March and April. To become familiar with the calendar, they marked important events on them. They will soon be learning about telling time to the hour and half-hour.

The pre Ks read the book, *Not Enough Room!* Through this story they discussed how to solve a mathematical problem, shared possible solutions, and came up with the right mathematical answer and the right social answer. Block building accompanied this activity, since it greatly supports the learning of geometry and spatial orientation.

The pre Ks were also curious about money, since they saw the kindergartners learning about that subject, so they spent one class learning about coins and bills, and playing with money and a money abacus. They also reviewed patterns, this time learning to abstract: red, blue, red, blue, would be ABAB, etc. Finally, they are now learning the concept of time as it relates to the times of the day in connection to daylight.