

ACADEMY A.R.T.S. NEWS

The Academy of Movement and Music

605 Lake Street

Oak Park, Illinois

(708)848-2329

JANUARY 2009

VOL. 13, NO. 4

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

January 5: Classes resume

January 13-26: 2009-10 A.R.T.S. Registration begins for **Academy A.R.T.S. Current Families.**

January 19, Martin Luther King Jr. Day: The Academy is open.

January 27-February 7: 2009-10 A.R.T.S. Registration begins for **Academy Families not in the A.R.T.S. program.**

February 7: A.R.T.S. Sock Hop 6:00-7:30 PM

February 8: 2009-10 A.R.T.S. Registration for **new families begins.**

Downstairs A.R.T.S.

January



The month of January is a perfect time for the Downstairs A.R.T.S. children to get involved in some "Winter Fun." As we welcome in the New Year, this unit provides us with the opportunity to explore winter from the warm and cozy confines of our classrooms. Our movement classes are sure to find us putting into action a variety of winter words such as slip and slide, shiver and shake, skate and ski. Our books, art and music will focus on snow and ice and numerous outdoor activities. We will even try our hand at making our own "snowballs." If the weather cooperates, we plan to fill the water table with fresh snow from outside. This will give us a chance to explore its many properties as well as just have fun playing in it!

Our imaginative play area will take us to our own Academy ice rink. Here we will have many hats, scarves, mittens and pretend skates to put on and take off as we adventure onto our "ice" for more "Winter Fun!"

~ Niki Merrick



Downstairs

Creative Movement

In Downstairs A.R.T.S.

creative movement we are using the Pop Song and the Game Switch to learn about time and space and to improve creative problem solving skills. The room has four shapes taped to the floor: a square, a star, a triangle, and a rectangle. During the Pop Song ("Pop Goes the Weasel"), each child pops into his/her chosen shape. Next, I'll callout, "O.K., three counts to change your location and move into a new shape." After the children experiment with this basic switch, I create new challenges by altering the number of counts allowed for arriving in the new location, or by varying the locomotor movement used in transition (i.e., leaps, jumps, rolls, skips). We take on further challenges by increasing the number of children that need to be contained within each shape. For example, I might say, "You have ten counts to switch by jumping, and I'd like three people in one shape, and three in another, and two in each of the two shapes left." The children must be aware of how many, where, time elapsed and space covered. They learn to make quick decisions and movement choices.



~ Larry Ippel

Downstairs A.R.T.S. Thank You to . . .



Ava Weiler for the book The Very First Thanksgiving in celebration of her third birthday. What a terrific book to have in our book corner as we learned about the Pilgrims and Indians. Have fun being three, Ava!

Natalie Dauphinee for the Woody Guthrie CD in honor of her third birthday. This is a great addition to our music collection and is certain to be used over and over again. Happy 3rd Birthday, Natalie!

Xander Pohl for the book Alexander and the Terrible Horrible No Good Very Bad Day in honor of your third birthday. Thank you for sharing one of your favorite stories with all your Academy friends. Happy Birthday #3, Xander!

Special Thanks to . . .

All the Downstairs A.R.T.S. parents who have come to read to the children these past months. There are open spaces available if any moms or dads are interested in spending a bit of time in our book corner. Stop in the office to sign up. The children really enjoy having you come and be a part of their day.



Sonja deJong's family for donating the magnetic calendar and display peacock for our classroom. Thank you for thinking of us!

The PTO and the great snack coordinators and parents who provided cookies and napkins to make our winter break celebration special.

Needed

Our supply of pull-ups and diaper wipes is very low. If your child is in diapers and you could donate some pull-ups and/or wipes, it would be greatly appreciated. Thanks!

Upstairs A.R.T.S. in January



In January our Fire Unit will ignite the sky with "firecrackers" for the New Year in China. Then our itinerary takes us to the northern mountains and fjords of Norway to explore Soldag (Sun Day). We'll wait for the sun to peak over the mountain to end the long winter. Flying to the south we'll experience a summer Sun Day in Peru.

The Monday Art Class will begin an exploration of color through painting. Each week the children will be mixing two primary colors to produce a secondary color. On the last day, all the colors will be available for the children's experimentation. Each of the Monday children will have one of their paintings displayed on the walls of the front staircase. Be sure to come in and find your child's painting.

In Science we'll investigate fire and heat in several ways. Time will be explored through the use of clocks. Colors and rainbows will also be examined.

~ Donna Pries

Upstairs Creative Movement



Creative movement for Upstairs A.R.T.S. is focusing on time and variation. Familiar songs such as "Lazy Mary," "Name Dance," "Trucks Everywhere" and "Pony Ride" are being accelerated and decelerated. The dancers are galloping forwards, backwards, and sideways in "Pony Ride." They are using each of these facing variations along with the level variations of high, low, and middle. One day we did the whole class backwards!

We are also exploring locomoting through space with duration challenges. For example, one time the children might have six counts to go from here to there, but next time they might have allotted only four counts. At other times they might have as many as twelve or even twenty counts to move. The students are beginning to understand the concepts of early and late, as well as controlling speed and basic locomotor selections. If the counts to be used are six, and they arrive in three, they are early on arrival. They might be moving too fast or maybe they just need to add a hold (stillness) to their progression. Making choice of step, direction, speed, and level are all parts of the child's developing awareness of movement in our study. We are also adding to our movement vocabulary by experimenting with isolations and accumulations.

~ Larry Ippel

Reminder

Sharing Days are **Wednesday, January 21st** and **Thursday January 22nd** this month.

Upstairs A.R.T.S. Thank You to . . .



Aidan Green for the Magnetic Patterning project in celebration of his 5th birthday. This project will help us develop our math skills.

Natalie Beck for the game "Who Lives Where?" to honor her 5th birthday. This concentration game has already become a favorite activity.

Special Thank You to . . .

To all the parents who have given generously of their time reading to the children in the classroom. The sign-up sheet has openings if you would like to stop by upstairs.



Phone List Changes

Add to phone list:

Ariadne Chow

Downstairs A.R.T.S.

Tuesday/ Thursday PM (blue group)

1040 S. Humphrey, Oak Park, IL 60304

708-434-5343

parents ~ Aoifinn & Anthony



Parents/Drivers . . .

On bright sunny days, it can be very difficult to see car pool numbers at the end of the line because of glare. Please display your number:

1. Outside the car
2. Clearly right side up

You may have to display the number again as you get nearer the front of the line. Thank you for your cooperation.

125

Reminder ~ Emergency Closings

We are now registered for school closings due to inclement weather at www.emergencyclosings.com. Enter "Academy of Movement and Music" to check our status. A.R.T.S. Preschool families will be contacted via a "Phone Calling Tree" as well.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Registration for the 2009-2010 school year for currently enrolled A.R.T.S. families will begin on Tuesday, January 13th and go through January 26th.

Academy families with a child enrolled in dance/music classes may register that child and any siblings during our in-house registration period from January 27th – February 7th. On Sunday, February 8th, the Academy will hold an A.R.T.S. Open House for new families. We will begin taking new registrations during the Open House. Take advantage of the A.R.T.S. only in-house period and register early! Our programs fill quickly, the mornings slots are often filled the first day of in-house registration.

If you have any questions/concerns about next year: the differences between the Downstairs and Upstairs programs, information about Friday in A.R.T.S., combining A.R.T.S. with Kindergarten, etc., feel free to call me.

~ Stephanie Clemens



Reminder

Call the Academy Office . . .

- If your child will be absent or on vacation.
- To report a contagious illness – we send home "health notices" to alert parents of any infectious or contagious disease that they may have been exposed to (see following health letter).
- If you are going to be late picking up your child.
- If you have problems or questions.



Health Alert Information

By now you have received at least one of our pink "Health Alert" sheets, so you are aware that changing weather and indoor activities with lots of little people creates a situation for sharing germs. To help us keep this kind of sharing to a minimum and to support our ongoing efforts to keep everyone healthy, please read the following information carefully.



Reasons to keep a child home from school:

- diarrhea
- rash and fever
- unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing
- vomiting two or more times in 24 hours
- conjunctivitis until treatment started plus 24 hours
- impetigo until treatment started plus 24 hours
- strep throat until treatment started plus 24 hours; no fever 24 hours
- head lice until morning after first treatment
- scabies until morning after first treatment
- chicken pox until at least six days after onset of rash
- whooping cough until five days of antibiotic treatment completed

The Academy will do the following:

- If a child becomes ill at school, a parent will be called and a place will be provided for the child to rest until a parent or designated caregiver can come and pick them up.
- We will send home a Health Alert pink sheet anytime we are informed of a communicable disease in your child's group. In order to do this *we need you as parents to inform us if your child has been diagnosed with any communicable disease.*
- We encourage and teach frequent and careful hand washing to diminish the opportunities for germs to travel.
- We wash down tables, chairs, mats and classroom materials with 10% bleach solution frequently.

You can help by:

- Seeing that your child has adequate sleep/rest - young children need a minimum of ten hours;

- Providing a nourishing breakfast. It can take a little creativity if your little person is reluctant to eat in the morning, but it is a necessity;
- Encouraging frequent and thorough hand washing;
- Cooperating with our guidelines for keeping your child at home when ill;
- Calling us to report an illness;
- Remembering that the Academy is a PEANUT-FREE ZONE.

One last reminder:

Sending medication in your child's backpack to be taken by the child at a day care provider's without informing the teacher or director is a dangerous practice. If another child finds the medicine and ingests it, poisoning and allergic reaction may occur which puts children at unnecessary risk. It is a serious health and safety risk to all our children when a parent or adult sends any medication to school in a child's backpack without informing the teacher.

Thank you for your attention to this vital information. We are sure that we are all united in wanting a healthy, safe year at the Academy.

~ Stephanie, Niki, and Donna

No Fun to be Young

by Eva Marer, from Health Magazine, December 2003

If you're the parent of a child born in the fall, you may know the question echoing through preschools everywhere: Can he/she start kindergarten, or should I hold her/him back? Apparently, being the youngest in the class by even a few months can have a surprisingly significant effect.

In the study, researchers in Great Britain surveyed the parents and teachers of more than 10,000 school children ages 5 to 15, asking them about the kids' emotional well-being and behavior; the pupils were also queried. No matter the age group, the scientists found, children in the youngest third of the class were about 20 percent more likely to have a mental-health problem such as anxiety, ADHD, or "oppositional disorder," which is pretty much what it sounds like.

The results don't mean all young-for-their-grade kids carry a huge burden, says study leader Robert Goodman, M.D., Ph.D., a professor of brain and behavioral medicine at King's College in London. But they do suggest that teachers could decrease the net suffering of students by being more sensitive to age. Teachers often forget to make allowances for their youngest charges; it might help, the researchers say, if they called roll by birth order or grouped kids by age.

Of course, parents need to be sensitive to their child's development as well. To test where yours stands, take the quiz used in this research. Visit

www.youthinmind.com (your child must be 4 to 17). The site gives parents a report in lay language, plus a more technical assessment that they can take to the doctor.

The Value of Consistency in a Preschool Education

by *Maribeth Petroliunas,*

Updated from the January

1999 A.R.T.S. Newsletter



The winter months bring with them an abundance of preschool fairs and open houses, our own included, as parents begin to investigate programs and reserve spaces for the upcoming school year. Children grow and change both so rapidly and so individually in a few months time, that it is often a mind boggling task to estimate where your child will be developmentally come September. Much literature is available on how to choose a good preschool program. However, very little of it addresses the importance of consistency in a child's early learning experience.

The A.R.T.S. program is somewhat unique in that it is designed to provide in a single site a complete early childhood education for children 2 to 6 years of age. The consistent repetition within a slowly evolving developmental curriculum is the basis for emerging self-control, self-esteem, and self-awareness.

Early learning has as its basis a trust relationship that develops through nurturing and consistency over time. It is the goal of the A.R.T.S. teacher to organize the learning environment to provide a great deal of variety within a highly structured, sequential routine. In turn, this provides the child with a great deal of security and consequently, a great deal of freedom to take risks, to try new things, to push the parameters of a skill or activity being presented...to learn at their own pace and in their own style.

A.R.T.S. learning experiences are multi-leveled and open-ended, covering a broad range of skills over a period of years. Although your child may be exposed to some of the same materials, music, and activities through his/her years at the Academy, there is always room for challenge by adding or altering components as skills are built. Each time a child approaches an activity he or she does so armed with the knowledge learned in the previous exposure. The average student will approach the same materials from at least 3 to 4 developmental levels in 2-3 years in the A.R.T.S. program.

From a child's first days in the A.R.T.S. program, this important trust relationship is consistently nurtured. At 2 years old, students are encouraged to make choices and bring their choices to some sort of closure, either completion of the entire task and/or clean-up when they have had their fill. Over the course of time they learn the appropriate use and care of many materials, leading to mastery of the entire classroom and ultimately to mastery of all the classroom areas of activities offered on Montessori Day.

In Art, the child is exposed to a variety of media from age 2 on. The focus is always on the creative process – the actual manipulation of materials – rather than on the finished product. As skills are built, students learn how to use a given medium appropriately, how to work within a given area, to respect materials and the work of others, and are given a beginning understanding of the principles of color and design through the use of line and shape. The

dramatic evolution of this process can be seen in the costumes and props the children themselves create for their Upstairs A.R.T.S. performances.

The role of consistency and routine in skill development can be seen more concretely in the gross motor areas of our program. For example, when using the walking boards, a child under 3 usually needs a hand to hold or edges sideways along the board. At 3-3 ½, they go forward, and by 4 are on tiptoe. At 4-4 ½, they go backwards slowly, while another six months of practice within a safe consistent structure brings confidence. By 5-6, some students are traversing the walking boards backwards on tiptoe.

A similar glimpse at basic foot patterning would look something like this. A typical 2-year old jumps and marches. By 2 ½-3, they may march backwards or hop, often preferring one foot. At 3-

3 ½, some can do alternate hops; some skip. At 3 ½-4, some begin skipping forwards and backwards, and by 4-5, most can do a down-up-up alternating R+L as well as 1-2 leap. 4 ½-5s can do step-together-step-hop, the beginning polka pattern (sideways), and 1-2 leap becomes easy. At age 5-5 ½, some children have mastered the polka pattern forward. Once again, none of this can be accomplished without the structured and consistent opportunity to repeatedly practice these skills in a secure environment.

The "Name Game," a hallmark of Larry's creative movement classes, is a daily event. Repetitive to be sure but with its structure is the potential to build a myriad of skills. At 2, the young dancer begins with the concept of taking turns. He/she usually comes to the center of the circle or remains on his/her mat and jumps or attempts to jump in a gallop-like movement, 2 ½-3s begin to explore space and travel around the class circle usually in a run. Awareness of time is usually limited to fast or slow, and the duration of the dance is not yet established. An increased awareness of the progression of the dancer's turns around the circle is also prevalent. 3-3 ½ offers a flurry of new skills to be explored. There is an increased awareness of self and duration of time. The child's personal space in the circle is well established with the name dance always ending there. Duets are popular. The ideas of forwards and backwards, along with the exploration of basic locomotor steps (walking, running, hopping, jumping) are introduced. 3 ½-4 brings the exploration of sequencing these locomotor steps into combinations. Level changes, freezes, and line of direction changes become options to consider. At 4-5, the child begins to predetermine the choreography of his/her name dance, beginning to compose the movements mentally before attempting to move into a dance. As the young dancer grows and masters the basic motor skills, he/she begins to monitor his/her own success and continues to enjoy moving and moving to music for its own sake. This confidence and enjoyment makes for a happy child.

The bottom line is come January 15, the date in-house registration opens for 2008-2009, if you find yourself with a "been there – done that", "it's time for a change" sort of feeling, take a moment to reconsider. Happy, confident learners grow in an environment that provides consistency, structure, and respect for the individual. This environment nurtures a trust relationship between students and teachers, consequently giving the student the freedom and security to explore and develop to his/her highest potential. The A.R.T.S. program provides such an environment and has over 20 years of successful, confident alumni as its proof.

Reminder Mark Your Calendars!

A.R.T.S. PTO Sock Hop
Saturday, February 7th
6:00-7:30 PM



Valentine Sock Hop Raffle



The Valentine Sock Hop and our 7th Annual Raffle is right around the corner. THANK YOU to all who have donated prizes! Raffle tickets go on sale this month. A letter and tickets will be sent home with your child. They cost \$5.00 each. We encourage you to offer tickets to friends, family, co-workers and neighbors. Proceeds from the raffle will benefit the upstairs and downstairs A.R.T.S. preschool programs.

We have some exciting prizes this year including:

- Memberships to Brookfield Zoo and Wonderworks.
- Family Fun passes to Tristar and free My Gym classes.
- Merchandise gift certificates to several local businesses such as Vestio, Bottega M, Scratch-n-Sniff and more.
- Free night's stay at Hotel Intercontinental.
- Bulls Tickets.
- Restaurant gift certificates from Wishbone, Buzz Café, Café Winberie and more.
- Exciting merchandise including children's toys and clothing, jewelry, designer clothing, DVD sets, dancewear from Leo's and more.

In addition, the Special Raffle is back! We will have some extra special raffle items which you will only be able to bid on at the Sock Hop. More details to come.

If you have any questions, please contact **Marisa Green** at [708-488-8035](tel:708-488-8035)/marisagreen@sbcglobal.net or **Paula Maggio** at [708-358-0037](tel:708-358-0037)/maggio@mc.net.