



# CGS PTO Newsletter

## April 2011

### Coventry Grammar School

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Coventry, CT 06238

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CGS PTO Newsletter  
April 2011

### A Memo From Marybeth Moyer, Principal

Happy Spring!! As we patiently wait for the warmth and beauty of the new season, we continue to see amazing physical, academic and social growth in our students. One of my most valued roles at Coventry Grammar School is the opportunity to have genuine and lively conversations with students. Whether in the hallways, in classrooms or in problem-solving situations, I find that the messages that the students convey to me are often extremely thought-provoking and meaningful. I would like to share words of wisdom from your children. While these are not all original and a variety of different versions exist, they are wonderful examples of the thinking of our young children. As I reflect on my own role as an elementary principal, a parent and a grandparent, I have found these to be wonderful reminders.

#### Words of Wisdom from Your Children

1. **Resist the urge to spoil me.** I know quite well that I ought not to have all I ask for – I'm only testing you.
2. **Be firm and consistent with me.** I prefer it. It makes me feel more secure.
3. **Protect me from developing bad habits.** I have to rely on you to detect them in the early stages.
4. **Don't make me feel smaller than I am.** It only makes me behave foolishly "big".
5. **Please be patient with me.** I may be a late-bloomer.
6. **Please correct me privately, not in front of people if you can help it.** I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private.
7. **Remember that I can't explain myself as well as I would like.** This is why I'm not always very accurate.
8. **Let me experience the consequences of my actions.** I need to learn the hard way--sometimes.
9. **Don't nag.** If you do, I have to protect myself by appearing indifferent.
10. **Don't take too much notice of my small ailments.** Sometimes, they get me the attention I need.
11. **Listen to my fears, however silly they may sound.** They are terribly real to me, and you can do so much to reassure me if you try to understand.
12. **Only make promises you can keep.** Remember, I feel terribly let down when promises are broken.
13. **Be consistent.** When you are inconsistent, it completely confuses me and makes me lose faith in you.
14. **Listen to my questions.** If you don't, you will find that I stop asking and will seek my information elsewhere.
15. **Don't ever suggest that you are perfect.** I have learned that we all make mistakes.
16. **Remember, I love experimenting.** This is how I learn so please put up with me.
17. **I am growing up quickly.** I know it may be difficult for you to keep pace with me, but please try.
18. **Please praise and acknowledge me for the things I do,** for then I will grow up without the stress of comparing and competing.
19. **Please keep reminding me that I am basically good, capable and worthwhile** so I can grow up loving and accepting myself.
20. **Remember, I thrive on understanding and love,** but I don't need to tell you, do I?

It is important that we listen carefully for we are the role models and heroes for our children. They have expectations and goals for us just as we do for them. Together, we will meet success!



Happy Spring!

April showers bring May flowers.

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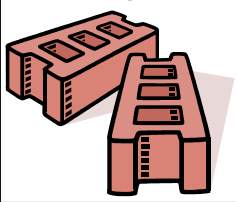
# Kindergarten News

## Kindergarten Team

Teachers: Wendy Bayer, Terry Bitwinski, Heidi Bosco, Eileen Hosey, and Debbie Hurlburt  
Para-Educators: Debbie Carroll and Sue Lewis



Living things have certain characteristics that distinguish them from non-living things, including growth, movement, reproduction and response to stimuli. Students will observe and describe the needs, behaviors and differences between living and non-living things.



Kindergarten classes have been working on comparing and contrasting materials used to build different types of homes in science. We will be finishing up this unit and beginning a theme on *living and non-living*. What processes are necessary for life's unity and diversity? Living things have certain characteristics that distinguish them from non-living things, including growth, movement, reproduction and response to stimuli. Students will observe and describe the needs, behaviors and differences between living and non-living things. They will have opportunities to plant seeds and care for plants.

As we begin the last quarter of the school year, we emphasize the recognition of high frequency words included in the kindergarten literacy program. By the end of the year, the children will have practiced recognizing twenty-six (or more) high frequency words through a variety of activities including shared reading of big books, daily news and announcements and games. Flash cards are also used for word recognition and sentence building. Since December we have been sending home the high frequency words as the weekly "star words." Please help your child learn to recognize these words.

There is a range of ages and developmental levels among the children in each kindergarten class. Our literacy program provides instruction and activities designed to advance each child's reading skills. Some children become emergent readers while others continue to develop pre-reading skills. Be sure to return your child's guided-reading book and folder in a timely manner. You can support your child's development by reading to and with your child each day. These suggestions will reinforce some of the concepts emphasized at school.

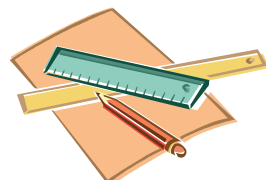
- Point to and read the title on the cover of the book. Discuss the author and illustrator.
- At times, select books with a picture and a few sentences on each page. Talk about the pictures before reading the text. Point to the words as you read.
- Reread the story. Many stories include rhyming words, repeated phrases as well as explicit connections between text and pictures.
- Encourage your child to join in "reading" along with you. Is there a pattern to the text? Point out high-frequency words as you come across them.
- Talk about the story as you read. Ask your child to predict what will happen. The familiar "wh" questions (who, what, when, why) foster thinking and comprehension.
- Name the characters and setting of the story. Summarize the story by recalling events that happened in the beginning, the middle and the end. Was there a problem in the story? How was it resolved?
- What was the author's purpose in creating this book? Share your thoughts, and ask your child to do the same.
- Above all else, enjoy reading together!



Since December we have been sending home the high frequency words as the weekly "star words." Please help your child learn to recognize these words.

One upcoming math topic, *Exploring Numbers 11-15*, includes counting, matching and making groups of objects and pictures; representing groups that are more than, fewer than or the same as a particular number; counting back from numbers less than 15; representing part-part-total relationships and identifying the coins-penny and nickel. More measurement activities including describing, comparing and estimating length, capacity and weight of objects are coming ahead with the topic, *Measurement*.

We look forward to meeting with all parents during parent/teacher conferences on April 12, 13, and 14. It is important for us to discuss your child's progress with you at this time. If you have not already confirmed your appointment, please contact your child's teacher to do so or set up an alternative time as soon as possible.



# First-Grade News

## First-Grade Team

Teachers: Megan Babcock, Bruce Gale, Colleen Hamblett, Patricia Klaneski, Matthew Kyer, Jennifer Osowiecki, Cristy Rau, and Ginny Taber

Para-Educators: Laurie Darling and Jennifer Ray

Children are continuing to practice using reading strategies and retelling stories sequencing the events this month in reading. Referring to the characters by proper names and stating details and vocabulary from the text are also important for children to include when retelling the story. Please have your child retell the story after reading his or her guided-reading book to you at home. Children are also reading non-fiction books, discovering how the non-fiction book is organized and retelling the main ideas and details read in the book.

Our focus in math will be working on extending number patterns, reviewing fact families, and problem solving involving money. Understanding the relationship between addition and subtraction will also be studied as children continue to work on strategies for solving addition and subtraction problems.

Staying healthy will be the unit of study for our physical education enrichment classes. Mrs. Caldwell, who is a certified health teacher, will be leading lessons in each first-grade class. In addition to Mrs. Caldwell's health lessons first-grade teachers will conclude the state-mandated program, *Here's Looking at You*, covering social skills and drug prevention. This unit is presented through team teaching. The children enjoy different teaching styles as the teachers travel to each classroom to present a lesson.

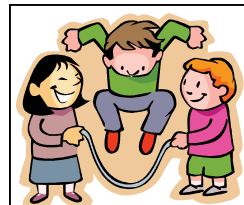
Report cards will be coming home Monday, April 11. Teachers are looking forward to meeting parents during parent teacher conferences, April 12, 13, and 14. If you do not have a conference appointment scheduled, please contact your child's teacher.

Changes in staff will be happening this month. Miss Cacio will be completing her student-teaching assignment with Mr. Gale and his students. In Mrs. Hamblett's class Miss Baron will also conclude her student teaching. The last week in April teachers and students will welcome Mrs. Babcock back to the first-grade team. We have enjoyed working the past few months with Mrs. Osowiecki, who has been the long-term substitute for Mrs. Babcock's class. We wish Mrs. Osowiecki, Miss Cacio and Miss Baron continued success in their careers.

Finally, spring brings changing weather. Please have children bring warm jackets in case the wind causes the temperature to fall.



Understanding the relationship between addition and subtraction will also be studied as children continue to work on strategies for solving addition and subtraction problems.



Staying healthy will be the unit of study for our physical education enrichment classes.

# Second-Grade News

## Second-Grade Team

Teachers: Carolyn Bennett, Jerry Craig, Nancy Gwozdz, Erin Hazzard, Heather McPeck, Nancy Plaster, and Angela Puccia

Para-Educators: Gloria Barry and Heidi Holever

Spring is finally upon us! After a long winter inside, students are finally able to take full advantage of the warmer weather. We will again be taking students outside for snack break and recess. For those days that are on the cool side, please provide your child with a light jacket or sweatshirt.

Topics eight and nine in our mathematics program include place value to 1,000, as well as addition and subtraction of two-digit numbers, with and without regrouping. A continued emphasis is being placed on student memorization of math addition facts through nine. Subtraction facts will be introduced at the start of the fourth quarter.

Students continue to practice different reading strategies while in their reading groups. We are now focusing on reading non-fiction books. Students are learning to use a table of contents, read captions and headings and to identify main ideas. Please continue to encourage your child to read fifteen minutes daily at home.

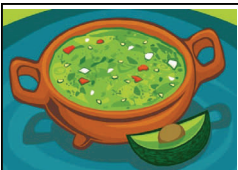
In writing, students are learning the narrative-writing process. They are writing entertaining beginnings, including descriptive details, adding suspense to keep the reader wondering, and

(continued on page 4)



We will again be taking students outside for snack break and recess. For those days that are on the cool side, please provide your child with a light jacket or sweatshirt.

(2nd grade, continued)



On April 1, students rotated through the second grade classrooms completing Mexican themed crafts & enjoying a sampling of foods from the region.

composing main events. In the second-grade classrooms students are busily writing different genres of poetry such as limericks, couplets, cinquains, and haiku.

Our study of Mexico will be topped off with a "Mexican Festival" on Friday, April 1. Students will rotate through the second-grade classrooms completing Mexican themed crafts and enjoying a sampling of foods from the region. *Gracias* to all those volunteers who helped make this event possible.

Finally, report cards will be sent home on April 11. Parent-teacher conferences will be held on Tuesday, April 12, Wednesday, April 13, and Thursday, April 14. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss your child's academic progress. If you need to schedule a time, please contact your child's teacher.

The second-grade team wishes you and your family a warm, sun-filled April vacation.



**The FIVE Essential Elements of Reading:**  
Phonemic Awareness  
Phonics  
Fluency  
Vocabulary  
Comprehension



## From Our Reading Room ~

**Reading Room Team**

Jennifer Jones, Carol Bittner, Nan Kandolin, Hannah Pietrantonio, Mary Talaga

### How You Can Help at Home with the FIVE Essential Elements of Reading

- **Phonemic Awareness** is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the discrete sounds in words. The ability to hear sounds in language is referred to as *phonological awareness*. You can encourage your child to participate in activities and play games that involve connecting, sorting, and manipulating sounds and rhymes. Nursery rhymes help children to associate discrete sounds with specific letters.
- **Phonics** involves the relationship between letters and individual sounds, (also called phonemes), and helping children to recognize that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken words. You can help your child by having them use magnetic letters to talk about the letters, what sounds they make, and what words can be made when we put the letters together.
- **Fluency** is the ability to read text quickly and accurately, with expression. Fluent readers recognize words automatically and group words as they read, creating a flow of words rather than pauses between words. Encourage your child to read familiar books over and over again; this helps them to develop fluency, phrasing, word recognition and confidence.
- **Vocabulary** refers to words and their meanings. Children must have good vocabulary skills in order to communicate effectively; these skills apply to speaking, listening, reading and writing. You can help your child with new and difficult words that will appear in the book. You can encourage your child to use new vocabulary when writing to make it more expressive and detailed.
- **Comprehension** refers to the ability to understand what one is reading. Children with strong comprehension skills are able to relate the text they are reading to what they already know, while constructing new knowledge and understanding. You can help your child by encouraging him/her to make predictions, ask questions, and to form opinions while reading. You can also help your children to make the connection between their book and their own life.

Information was created by: Literacy Collaborative at Lesley University



## From Our School Nurse ~ Mrs. Paula Curtiss

### Let's Get Moving!

Spring is here! This is the time of year we come out of hibernation and begin to get outdoors again. Did you know that physical fitness makes a vital contribution to a student's school success? So get yourselves and your children outside. Start moving! Pick an activity you enjoy doing alone and with your children. Set a good example for them to follow. What a wonderful life lesson you will be teaching!

### HUSKY

Is your family in need of health insurance? HUSKY Infoline is a specialized unit of United Way of Connecticut that provides information on the HUSKY program. You can access information, receive an application or apply by phone at the following number:

HUSKY Infoline, toll free, 1-877-CT-HUSKY (1-877-284-8759).  
Call Monday – Friday between 8:30 am and 6:00 pm.

Enjoy the longer, warmer days ahead!

Paula Curtiss, School Nurse  
860-742-4558  
[pcurtiss@coventryct.org](mailto:pcurtiss@coventryct.org)



Get yourselves and your children outside. Start moving! Pick an activity you enjoy doing alone and with your children. Set a good example for them to follow.



## From Our Math Corner ~ Mrs. Stephanie Wissler, ASSIST Program

From NCTM (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics) - Number sense refers to a person's general understanding of number and operations along with the ability to use this understanding in flexible ways to make mathematical judgments and to develop useful strategies for solving complex problems (Burton, 1993; Reys, 1991). Researchers note that number sense develops gradually and varies as a result of exploring numbers, visualizing them in a variety of contexts, and relating them in ways that are not limited by traditional algorithms (Howden, 1989). Developing students' understanding of numbers, ways of representing numbers, relationships among numbers, and number systems are focus areas for grades PreK–2. In the primary grades, children move from developing basic counting techniques to understanding number size and relationships, place value and operations. However, students develop this understanding at different rates. Some young children can count 13 objects, but they do not see that 13 is one group of ten and 3 ones. Others can group objects into tens and ones and understand their numerical representation.

Here are a few activities to develop number sense.

### Count Objects

Encourage your child to count pieces of fruit, cans of vegetables, stair steps, or kitchen utensils. Provide counters, such as paper clips or dried beans, and ask your child to count out specific amounts. First- and second-grade students can make groups of ones and tens to match place value names. For example, three sets of ten items and five single items are called "3 tens, 5 ones," and represent 35.

### Encourage Guessing

Have your child guess amounts after looking quickly at a set of objects. For example, put a handful of jelly beans into a cup and ask your child to guess the number, then count them out.

### Card Games

Card games such as "War" and "Go Fish" help children learn place value. You can show younger children how to figure out the value of the cards by counting the objects on the card.

Here are a few activities to develop number sense.

Count objects:



Encourage guessing:



Card games:





## From Our Friends at the Coventry Early Childhood Center ~

A generation ago few children had as much organized activity in their lives as children do today. Most days consisted of attending school, playing in the yard or neighborhood, eating the evening meal, and preparing for school the next day. Some young children had a piano lesson, baseball practice, or a ballet class one afternoon a week, but few encountered today's great variety of programming options.

While extracurricular activities can provide children an opportunity to learn important skills, some families today overdo it. Some kids have not just one extracurricular activity a week, but maybe two a day! Some are involved in sports every season and are also enrolled in dance class, music lessons, karate instruction, swimming lessons and more.

These activities are also beginning at an earlier age. It's not uncommon to hear 3-year-olds discussing their busy schedules. Some children excel at such activities, but too much programming can have detrimental effects. It's stressful to be rushed from one activity to the next. It's tiring to be in an organized program all day, or even for several hours, and then be taken to another class in the evening. Kids need time to play and relax in whatever ways they want. Also, the reduction of contact with family and close friends is a loss for young children.

We should ask ourselves several questions if we suspect over-programming. *Is this activity good for my child's self-esteem? Is this something she is interested in and enjoys? Is he overly tired? Has she begun to exhibit behavior problems not previously present?* If the answer to any of these questions is yes, it may be time to rethink the extracurricular schedule.

The CECC Staff



### Donuts With Donna

**DONUTS WITH DONNA:** The superintendent of schools is available for casual conversations with community members during the school year. "Donuts with Donna" is a way for you to greet your school superintendent, ask questions, and keep informed about education in our town. Please feel free to stop by, where there will be an informal atmosphere with an open dialogue and no set agenda. The next sessions of "Donuts with Donna" are being held on Tuesday, April 26 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. at the Nathan Hale Homestead at 2229 South Street and Tuesday, May 17 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at the Coventry Public Schools' Administration Building at 1700 Main Street.



### Weather-Related/Emergency Closings, Delays and Early Release Notifications

Announcements regarding these closings, delayed openings and early releases will be made via our ALERTNOW calling system. In addition to broadcasting this information on selected TV and radio stations, all student homes are now phoned by ALERTNOW. If families would like a list of the selected media outlets, please see the website at [www.coventrypublicschools.org](http://www.coventrypublicschools.org).



**The best way to welcome spring is to spend time outside with your children - playing, walking, chasing butterflies, or searching for flowers pushing up through the ground and leaves budding on the trees. Enjoy!**

## PTO News

March was a busy month full of great programs and events. The scrapbooking day on March 5 was a huge success, and we had over 100 people attend the talent show on March 18 to see our students perform their terrific acts! Thanks to all the volunteers who made these events possible. Over \$500 was raised for the *American Cancer Society Daffodil Days*. Thanks to all families who contributed to this great cause. We had a great response to the CT Whale game on March 26, and as of the printing of this newsletter, we eagerly anticipate our next Family Fun Exercise Night on March 31 and the results of the Box Tops for Education contest ending April 1.

Our next meeting is on Monday, April 11, at 6:30 p.m. in the gym. Free babysitting is provided. We hope to see you there!

### Upcoming Events:

- April 12 – 14 – Teacher Appreciation Days and Spring Book Fair (volunteers needed)
- Friday, May 13 - Dolphin Dance in the CGS gym (open to all students and their families)
- Friday, June 3 – CGS Arts Festival and Family Fun Festival (We still need lots of volunteers to make the Fun Festival a success!)
- Sunday, June 12 – *Rock Cats* game

### One last note:

Even though it is now spring, the weather is still very changeable. As the children are now going outside many days for recess, please be sure your child brings appropriate clothing, such as snow boots or sturdy shoes, coats and sweaters, hats and gloves, for outside play. Also, please be sure your children have a change of clothes in their backpacks in case they get wet or muddy at recess. This is especially important as the Health Office cannot provide a change of clothes for your children if their clothes become soiled at recess.

**Look for the CGS PTO on Facebook and become a member today!**

#### Beth Hassett, Co-President

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#### Anita Hilinski, Secretary

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#### Camilla Byam, Treasurer

Phone: 860-742-8682;

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## PTO Treasurer's Report ~ as of March 14, 2011

February 17, 2011 - March 14, 2011

Treasurer: Camilla Byam

<b>Beginning Balance February 17, 2011:</b>	<b>\$3,571.49</b>
<b>Income:</b> ~ Bake sale: \$2,129.75	<b>\$2129.75</b>
<b>Expenses:</b> ~ Babysitting (Feb Meeting) \$ 25.00	<b>(\$25.00)</b>
<b>Ending Balance March 14, 2011:</b>	<b>\$5,676.24</b>



For an electronic copy of this newsletter,  
or for additional information about the Coventry Grammar School,  
please visit our website:

[www.coventryps.org/cgs/cgs.html](http://www.coventryps.org/cgs/cgs.html)