

# Ready to Succeed

An Early Literacy and School Readiness Newsletter for Professionals

## Inquiring Minds Want to Know

In simple terms a problem-solver is someone who questions, investigates, and explores solutions to problems. A problem-solver will stick with a problem and try different strategies to find a solution. From birth children begin to problem solve. In fact, researchers tell us that the brain learns best when it is confronted with a problem. When we encounter routine situations we repeat stored information and this can prohibit new



learning. So even infants start their learning through problem-solving (learning how to raise their head, roll over, or cry when they have a need.)

Preschoolers use problem-solving every day to make sense of their world. Many of these problem-solving skills are the beginnings for math and science skills. Children can be helped to learn math and science concepts by talking about how we use math in our every day life. Math is more than counting. It is reasoning, recognizing, and matching shapes. It is sequencing, sorting, and comparing.

Science uses many of the same skills needed for math. It also includes observing, classifying, exploring, and predicting. Science also involves questioning and answering. The process of problem-solving can be taught in everyday activities:

- ⇒ Identify and talk about the problem - *What is wrong with the sink? Why won't it drain?*
- ⇒ Brainstorm possible solutions - *What can we do to fix it? Can we use the cup to dip the water out? Can we wait and see if it will drain on its own? Can we remove the plug?*
- ⇒ Evaluate possible solutions in terms of resources - *How long will it take up to dip all the water out with the cup? Will it drain on its own before snack time? Will your hand reach the plug?*
- ⇒ Select one of the solutions - *Let's pull the plug.*
- ⇒ Try it out - *Pull the plug.*
- ⇒ Evaluate the results - *Look, it is draining. See how fast the water level is lowering.*

The language of math and science includes words

such as:

more / less    thick / thin  
big / little    tall / short  
long / short    early / late  
few / many    small / large  
first / last    high / low  
light / heavy    group / pair  
wide / narrow  
same / different

Math and science use other descriptions and observations such as shapes and colors in communicating results and findings. Be sure to use these words and concepts in discussions with children.

Here are a few book suggestions:

- The Doorbell Rang*  
Pat Hutchins
- The Crayon Counting Book*  
Pam Muñoz Ryan
- A Color of His Own*  
Leo Lionni
- Fish Eyes*  
Lois Ehlert
- The Cheerios Counting Book*  
Rob Bolster
- What Comes in 2's, 3's, and 4's?* Suzanne Aker
- Just Enough Carrots*  
Stuart J. Murphy

The article above is an excerpt from our "Off to a Good Start" curriculum. This workshop series is available for parents of four and five year olds and training is also available for early childhood educators.

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### Inside this issue:

Science for Winter: 2  
Mittens in the Snow

A Winter Poem and 2  
Songs

Books for the 2  
Season

Family Literacy Day 3  
Activity Faire a Big  
Success!

UCCE Open House 4  
& Customer Appreciation  
Day Planned



Family Literacy  
Day Activity Faire  
November 1, 2002  
~ ~

Clifford Necklace  
and Bear Hat  
~ ~

more on page 3

## Science for Winter: Mittens in the Snow

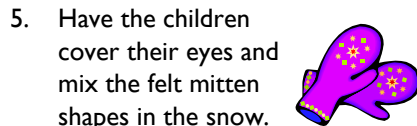
Mittens can be very useful when playing outside on a cold winter day. Here's an alternative idea for using those mittens inside where it's warm.

### You'll Need:

real mittens of various colors  
(excluding white)  
mitten-shaped felt cut outs of a few  
colors (including white)  
white foam packing "peanuts"  
sand/water table tub or other large  
rectangular tub

### What to Do:

1. Fill the tub with the snow  
(packing "peanuts").



2. Have a small group of children put on the real mittens and gather around the tub.
3. Encourage the children to play in the snow.
4. As the children play, ask them which color of mitten would be easiest to "lose" in the snow.
5. Have the children cover their eyes and mix the felt mitten shapes in the snow.
6. Ask the children to find all of the missing mittens.
7. Encourage the children to discuss



how easy or difficult it is to find the colored mittens and the white mittens.

8. Finally, ask them what color of animals or objects would be difficult to see in the snow.

### Explain:

When animal or objects blend into the background because it is the same color, it is hard to see. This is known as *camouflage*.



Animals rely on camouflage to protect them from predators in the wild.

## A Winter Poem and Songs

### MITTEN WEATHER

Thumbs in the thumb place,  
Fingers all together,  
This is the song we sing  
In mitten weather.

Doesn't matter weather  
They're made of wool or leather.  
Thumbs in the thumb place,  
Fingers all together,

This is the song we sing  
In mitten weather.



### SNOWFLAKES

Sung to: "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star"  
By: Jean Warren

Snowflakes, snowflakes dance around  
Snowflakes, snowflakes touch the  
ground  
Snowflakes, snowflakes in the air

Snowflakes, snowflakes everywhere!

### IT IS SNOWING

Sung to: "Frere Jacques"  
By: Sandra Winnett

It is snowing, it is snowing  
All around, all around  
Soft and quiet snowflakes  
Soft and quiet snowflakes  
Not a sound, not a sound.



## Books for the Season to Read with Children

### New Year

*Happy New Year*  
Emery Bernhard  
*New Year's Day*  
David F. Marx  
*Sesame Street Stays Up Late*  
Lou Berger  
*Gung Hay Fat Choy*  
June Behrens  
*Celebrating Chinese New Year*  
Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith

### Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

*Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King*  
Jean Marzollo  
*A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr.*  
David A. Adler (avail. in Spanish)  
*Martin Luther King, Jr. - A Man of Peace*  
Pat McKissack, et al  
*What is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day?*

Margaret Friskey  
*Martin Luther King, Jr.*  
Lola M. Schaefer

### Groundhog Day

*Punxsutawney Phil and His Weather*  
Wisdom Julia Spencer Moutran  
*Geoffrey Groundhog Predicts the*  
*Weather* Bruce Koscielniak  
*It's Groundhog Day*  
Steven Kroll  
*Gretchen Groundhog, It's Your Day!*  
Abby Levine  
*Wake Up, Groundhog!*  
Susan Korman, et al

### Valentine's Day

*Be My Valentine*  
Rosemary Wells, et al  
*Clifford's First Valentine's Day*

Norman Bridwell  
*Legend of the Valentine*  
Katherine Grace Bond  
*The Valentine Bears*  
Eve Bunting  
*Valentine Mice*  
Bethany Roberts

### President's Day

*President's Day: Let's Meet George*  
*Washington and Abraham Lincoln*  
Barbara Derubertis  
*The Story of George Washington*  
Stephanie Britt, et al  
*The Story of Abraham Lincoln*  
Stephanie Britt, et al  
*George Washington's Cows*  
David Small  
*Mr. Lincoln's Whiskers*  
Karen Winnick

# Family Literacy Day Activity Faire a Big Success!

In celebration of national Family Literacy Day on November 1st, the Ready to Succeed Program hosted "Family Literacy Day Activity Faire" at the Loomis Grange Hall. Children and their families or child care providers from all over the county attended this fun-filled, hands-on event. Children participated in a variety of arts, crafts, seed planting, and games which all related to a children's book with a family theme. Tracy Rufenacht of Loomis stated, "This was great - so much fun stuff for the kids to do! I had no idea about the Ready to Succeed Program and it was exciting to see what it was all about." There was a play area set up for the children with play tents, books, puzzles, and a family flannel board where children could create their own stories. Sweetheart the Clown entertained the children with balloon creations and juggling. Placer County Supervisor Harriet White also attended the event representing the Children and Families Commission and was impressed with all the event had to

offer families. The Commission, which funds the Ready to Succeed Program, provides services to families throughout the county with children birth to five years old.

For working the event's activity tables and helping with clean up, special thanks to Darcy Roenspie and Mickey Eichenhofer (PCOE Child Care Services); Beverly Costanzo, Richard Cushman, and Mary Callahan (Literacy Support Council of Placer County); Juli Raskauskas (UCCE); Deanna Anderson (my support); Ellen Doerner (Loomis Community 4-H Club Leader); June Stewart (Placer County 4-H Program Representative); and Tricia Kirk (4-H Afterschool Child Care Program). In addition, extra thanks to Michele Fisch (Nutrition BEST) and Rosemary Carter (Youth FSNEP) for set up/clean up help and working their activity tables.

And of course, thank you to all of the children who came and had a great time celebrating literacy with us!



**Reading *Bear's Busy Family*  
by Stella Blackstone  
before planting marigold seeds.**



**Making a Snow Person  
*The Snow Family*  
by Daniel Kirk**



**Paper Bag Puppets  
*Who's in a Family?*  
by Robert Skutch**



**The People in My Family  
*Families Are Different*  
by Nina Pellegrini**



**Sweetheart the Clown  
making balloon creations.**



**Bear Hat  
*Goldilocks and the Three Bears*  
by Jan Brett**



**Me Book  
*Tell Me Again About the Night I  
Was Born* by Jamie Lee Curtis**



**Pumpkin Bowling and Apple Toss  
*One Hundred is a Family*  
by Pam Muñoz Ryan**



**The Play Area  
ABC Puzzle Fun!**

Ready to Succeed

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Serving Placer County  
Since 1917



## UCCE Plans Open House - Customer Appreciation Day

You are all invited to join us for our second annual  
Open House and Customer Appreciation Day!

**Thursday, February 6th**  
**11:00 am ~ 6:00 pm**  
**UC Cooperative Extension Office**  
**11477 E Avenue ~ Auburn**

Come and see the wealth of resources, services, and programs we have to offer the community while you enjoy fabulous refreshments! Representatives will be on hand to answer your questions.

The University of California's Cooperative Extension offices are local problem-solving centers. More than 400 campus-based specialists and county-based farm, home, and youth advisors work as teams to bring the University's research-based information to California.

Cooperative Extension (CE) is a full partnership of federal, state, county, and private resources linked in applied research and educational outreach. CE's many teaching tools include: meetings, conferences, video programs, workshops, demonstrations, field days, newsletters, and manuals.

We offer Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor, Horticulturalist, Small Farm Advisor, Master Gardeners and Composters, 4-H Youth Development, Adult and Youth Food Stamp Nutrition Education, Food Security, Nutrition BEST, and **Ready to Succeed**.

For more detailed information about our event or for directions to our office, contact us at 530 889-7350. Information is also available on our website. Visit us online <http://ceplacer.ucdavis.edu>.

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Sharon K. Junge  
County Director

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Program Representative