



National Kindergarten Alliance

Newsletter

SUMMER 2013

WWW.NKATEACH.ORG

VOL. 12, NO. 3

Hot Topics

Classroom Procedures

Classroom Rules

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Centers

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Raising a Reader

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✧ President's Message ✧

To NKA Members,

I would like to share a lovely story with you that makes the e-mail rounds every so often. I have tried with no results to find the author so I could give credit. However, for now please just enjoy and take what you can from it.

When I was a kid, my Grandma liked to make breakfast food for dinner every now and then. And I remember one night in particular when she had made breakfast after a long, hard day. On that evening so long ago, she had placed a plate of eggs, sausage and extremely burned biscuits in front of my Granddad. I remember waiting to see if anyone noticed!

Yet all my Granddad did was reach for his biscuit, smile at my Grandma and ask me how my day was at school. I don't remember what I told him that night, but I do remember

watching him smear butter and jelly on that ugly burned biscuit. He ate every bite of that thing... never made a face nor uttered a word about it!

When I got up from the table that evening, I remember hearing my Grandma apologize to my Granddad for burning the biscuits. And I'll never forget what he said: "Honey, I love burned biscuits every now and then."

Later that night, I went to kiss Granddaddy good night and I asked him if he really liked his biscuits burned. He wrapped me in his arms and said, "Your Grandma put in a hard day of work today and she's real tired. And besides - a little burned biscuit never hurt anyone!"

As I've grown older, I've thought about that many times. Life is full of imperfect things and imperfect people. I'm not the best at anything,

and I forget birthdays and anniversaries just like everyone else. But what I've learned over the years is that learning to accept each other's faults, and choosing to celebrate each other's differences, is one of the most important keys to creating a healthy, growing, and lasting relationship.

And that's my prayer for you today... that you will learn to take the good, the bad, and the ugly parts of your life and lay them at the feet of God. Because in the end, He's the only One who will be able to give you a relationship where a burnt biscuit isn't a deal-breaker!

We could extend this to any relationship. In fact, understanding is the base of any relationship, be it a husband-wife or parent-child or friendship!

So, please pass me a biscuit, and yes, the burned one will do just fine.

And PLEASE pass this along to someone who has enriched your life. Be kinder than necessary because everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle.

Everything you do is based on the choices you make. It's not your job, the economy, the weather, an argument, or your age that is to blame. You and only you are responsible for every decision and choice you

make PERIOD.

Most Sincerely,
Penny Pillack, President



New Year's Resolution: Classroom Procedures, Not Rules

By David Ginsburg

For educators the new year begins in late August or early September, which means the time for resolutions is now, not January. And here's a perfect resolution for those of you who spend a lot of time and energy establishing and enforcing classroom rules: stop doing this. Instead, provide students clear procedures that will enable them to meet your expectations.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not suggesting you try to **control** kids. That's what most disciplinary rules are about.

Procedures, on the other hand, are about giving kids the structure they need in order to thrive. You can't do your best at anything if you don't know what you're supposed to do. That's the way it is in most arenas, so why would the classroom be any different?

Yep, clearer procedures, fewer behavior issues. Tell kids what

you want them to do, and they're going to be more responsible and cooperative. What a contrast with rules, which focus on what you *don't* want kids to do. (And of course many of them do it anyway-- after all, rules are meant to be broken.)

Visit my post about **rules** (following) for more on why you don't need many (if any) of them, and guidelines for when you do need them. And get to work ASAP on developing clear classroom procedures for your new year.



Classroom Rules

By David Ginsburg

A few rules for establishing rules so that they have a positive effect on classroom culture and efficiency:

1. **Be specific.** One of the most common rules I see posted in classrooms is "Be respectful." No problem there, since we should indeed hold students to this standard. Your definition of respect, however, may be different than that of your students. So be sure to define for students what respect looks like and sounds like in your classroom. Same goes for other ambiguous rules like "Be responsible."

2. **Use positive language.** Tell students what you want them to do rather than what you do *not* want them to do. Example: "Speak in a soft voice..." is better than "No yelling..."

3. **Include rationale.** Tell students what you want them to do, and *why* you want them to do it. Example: "Speak in a soft voice during group work so that students in other groups can hear each other."

4. **Think outside the box.** I'm not suggesting you be different for the sake of being different. But any time you can overcome a classroom challenge in a way students find refreshing (and even amusing), go for it.

5. **Choose natural consequences.** The best rules are self-policing such that you never need to interrupt class to say or do anything when students break them. A key to this is natural consequences.

Now don't get the wrong idea here. I still--and always will--maintain that most classroom rules are counterproductive and unnecessary. But there are circumstances for which having rules is prudent. What's important is to establish rules that are easily understood and enforced.

David Ginsburg
blogs.edweek.org



Phonological Awareness

by Vanessa Levin

Sometimes phonological awareness skill development gets overlooked so, with that in mind, I compiled these Top 10 Facts about Phonologic Awareness facts as a reminder of why opportunities for developing phonological awareness skills should be incorporated into daily routines.

#1 Phonological awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in oral language.

#2 Research has shown that phonological awareness is one of the four factors that determine future reading success.

#3 Children who have not developed phonological awareness skills are more likely to struggle with reading in later grades.



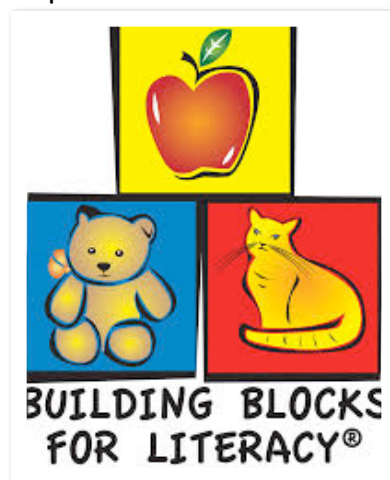
#4 Children can begin listening to and manipulating sounds well before they begin to recognize letters.

#5 Phonological awareness skills are an important part of the Kindergarten Common Core State Standards.

#6 Phonological awareness skills are included in most Pre-K state standards for those states that have them.

#7 Phonological awareness skills can be taught in fun, developmentally appropriate ways and are supported by NAEYC.

#8 Not all children will master phonological awareness skills at the same time, nor should we expect them to. Children will develop these skills at their own pace through repeated exposure to the sounds in language and opportunities to manipulate those sounds.



#9 A high-quality early childhood program includes opportunities for children to develop basic school readiness skills, including phonological awareness.

#10 Phonological awareness skills can be taught in Pre-K to help prepare children for Kindergarten. In Kindergarten phonological awareness skills should be taught to make sure students have all the tools they need to be successful readers.

Vanessa Levin is a passionate advocate for high-quality early childhood education. Contact her at www.pre-kpages.com



Math Research Reveals Early-Learning Needs

Basic arithmetic and focus on numbers is crucial to student success

By Raishay Lin
Contributing Editor
eSchool News

Numbers, counting, and low-level arithmetic are three basic competencies that are vital to later success in math, and students should have these key math skills by the end of first grade in order to be successful in math in fifth grade, according to a long-term study released by

psychologists at the University of Missouri (UM).



“Math is critical for success in many fields, and the United States is not doing a great job of teaching math,” David Geary, UM’s Curator’s Professor of Psychological Sciences, who led the research team, said in a statement. “In order to improve basic instruction, we have to know what to instruct.”

Researchers monitored 177 elementary students from 12 different elementary schools from kindergarten to fifth grade, and intend to continue monitoring them through high school. Students who understood the number line and some basic math facts in the beginning of first grade showed faster growth in math skills over the next five years.



“It is important that children understand the meaning of Arabic numerals, that is, the quantities they represent and be able to quickly translate quantities into numerals and numerals into quantities. [The study] also highlights the importance of knowing basic facts and the number line,” Geary said.

Teachers and parents can incorporate the results of this study into their math instruction to build long-term math skills and success in math.

“Don’t assume children understand quantities and numerals, even if they can count by rote or identify numerals,” said Geary. “Question them and give them a lot of practice and experience with numbers, the number line, and solving basic addition and subtraction problems.”



To measure math success, the study used a mathematical achievement test, Numerical Operations, which focuses on computational arithmetic such as fractions and decimals. Performance on the Numerical Operations test has been highly

correlated with performance on more difficult tests involving word problems, measurement, simple geometry, and statistics items.

In light of these correlations, achievement differences based on first grade math skills may have implications far beyond success in fifth grade math studies.

"This study reinforces the idea that math knowledge is incremental, and without a good foundation, a student won't do well because the math gets more complex," Geary said.

Although heritable intellectual ability certainly affects academic achievement, "a substantial portion of individual differences in children's mathematics achievement cannot be explained by general intelligence," the report said.

The study isolated the contributions of the three key areas of competence—numbers, counting, and arithmetic—to later success in math by controlling for general cognitive abilities such as intelligence, working memory, and processing speed.

"Do not worry about your difficulties in mathematics, I assure you that mine are far greater."
~ Albert Einstein

"Well done is better than well said."
~ Ben Franklin

"Failures are pillars of success."
~ Kumar Pernendu



How to Run Center and Activity Time in Your Classroom

by Kurt Schwengel

Running center time or activity time in your classroom is a great way to give students more individual attention, while at the same time making them more independent. I have been running activity centers in my Kindergarten classroom since 1996, and I can't imagine a day of teaching without them. For those unfamiliar with center or activity time (I call it "rotation"), it is when you set up four (for example) different activities for the students to do and they rotate from table to table every 15 minutes (for example). Every child does each activity; it is not to be confused with "choice time" activities in which the student chooses where to go and how long to stay.

Here are ways to run center time and activity time in your classroom.

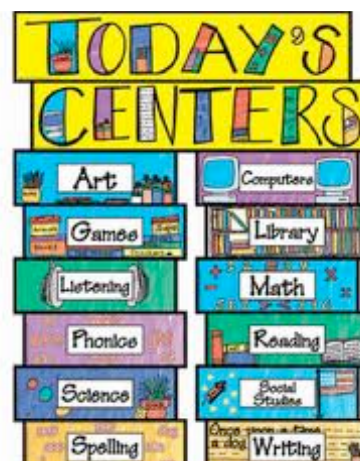
Purchase some form of timer. Timers can be purchased for your computer or as stand-alone clocks that either count

up or down. It takes a lot of stress off the teacher if he or she is not having to watch the clock, because the timer will tell them when it's time to rotate stations.



Make manageable groups. Grouping the kids can make or break your center time. Personally, I do not believe in ability grouping (grouping the students by their academic ability). I group the students according to who will socially work the best with one another.

Decide how many students can be in each group. In California, we have 20 students in our class. I find five students in each group to be ideal. So I set up four activities and have five students in each group.



If I had more than 20 students, I would opt to create another activity center rather than increase the number of students in a group.

Create a signal for the kids to rotate from table to table. I blink the lights on and off when it's time for the kids to rotate tables.

Have the kids rotate tables in the same direction everyday. We always go clockwise in the classroom so the kids are not constantly asking me which table to rotate to.



Ask for volunteers to help run the tables where the students may need help. If you cannot find adult volunteers to help you, you can always reach out to the older kids on campus. They usually love helping younger students.

Mix up the activities. I always try to make sure that of the four activities, there is some academic diversity among them. Typically I will have one language art center, one math center, one art center and one fine motor activity. Imagine that you are a student who struggles in language arts, for example, and you have to go to four language art centers in

a row. It can be quite frustrating for struggling students if all the centers hinge upon skills they do not have.



Kurt has been teaching Kindergarten at Franklin Elementary since 1996 and insists that he "isn't going anywhere cause Kindergarten is where all the fun is!" Contact him at www.rockandrollkindergarten.com

FINGER PLAYS 101

Dr. Jean Feldman

Posted: 19 Jul 2013

Have you ever watched children when they are doing a finger play? It's a perfect example of TPRR of TPR= Total Physical Response. You can almost see the synapses firing in the brain. If I were in charge of early childhood, children would spend at least 5 minutes a day doing finger plays, and here are some reasons why:

Engaged – Doing a finger play is a natural way to engage children's attention and help them focus.

Oral language – Repetition of finger plays builds oral language skills.

Auditory memory – Children activate their short term memory as they memorize finger plays.

Comprehension – Most finger plays have a simple story plot for children to follow.

Imagination – With so much time spent in front of a screen, finger plays encourage children to make pictures in their brains.

Sequence – Remembering the sequence in finger plays can help children retell stories.

Phonological awareness – Finger plays build a foundation for rhyme, rhythm and alliteration.

Eye-hand coordination – Visual connections with finger plays are important for writing and reading.

Small motor skills – Doing finger plays is like sending the fingers to the gym to exercise.



Executive function – Children develop self-regulation and impulse control when they participate in finger plays.

Social skills – All children can be successful with finger plays with this group experience.

Common Core State Standards

- You got it! Speaking, listening, comprehension, phonological awareness all rolled into one!

Skills for the 21st Century -

You've got those, too, with communication and cooperation.

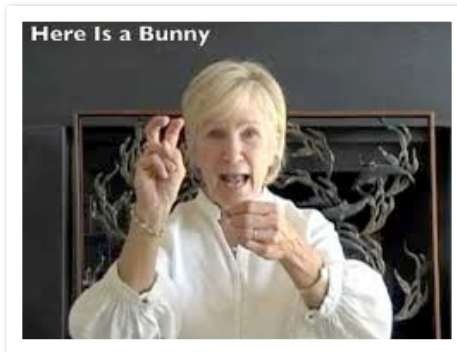
Best of all, finger plays are **FREE!** They can be used to entertain children during transitions or any time you've got a minute or two.



*If you'll go to my website, you'll find 5 free videos where I demonstrate finger plays.

*Go to my September, 2011, website and you'll find a download with the words. I would suggest taking one each week and putting it on an index card. (You could also write it on a language experience chart or use it on an interactive white board for choral reading.) At the end of the week punch a hole in

the rhyme and attach it to a book ring. If you'll do this every week, in a few months you'll have a whole RING OF RHYMES.



Free Reading Recover APP

My friend Dr. C.C. Bates at Clemson University has developed an app called "Record of Reading" that you might want to check out. Here is what she says about it:

I have developed an app with some computer scientists here at Clemson University. The app, Record of Reading, is available for free in the App Store. It is basically a digital running record for oral reading assessment. It correlates the Reading Recovery levels with the Fountas & Pinnell levels and with the Lexile levels when appropriate. All the formulas for accuracy rate and self-correction rate are embedded in the app and there is a fluency rubric as well. I think the neatest feature is that it records the child reading and syncs it with the teacher's

record. When it is replayed the record appears as the child reads. The record can be emailed - so if a teacher was participating in a staffing meeting on a child he/she could send the record to the others attending. We have had several releases to fix minor glitches, but the latest version is solid. We have had over 15,000 downloads.

Dr. Jean Feldman is a strong advocate for best practices and appropriate curriculum in the kindergarten. Visit her at: www.drjean.org and check out her daily offering on her blog: Dr. Jean & Friends blog



Following are Patterson's **Ten Principles** for parents to encourage children's reading:

Don't leave the burden with schools — it's your job to get kids excited about reading. But the solution is a lot simpler than you might think.

Read more! Here's a simple but powerful truth that many parents and schools don't act on: The more kids read, the better readers they become.

Pick out books they'll love. Kids say the number one reason they don't read more is because they can't find books they like. The best way to get kids reading is to give them books they'll gobble up.



Where to find great books and free books. ReadKiddoRead.com, GuysRead.com, Oprah.com, YALSA and ALA's sites. Where to find free or low-cost books: ReadKiddoRead.com, FirstBook.org, ReadertoReader.org.

Don't discriminate. Freedom of choice is key: Comics, re-reading a book, easy books and hard books are all fair game. Don't say no if the book is helping a kid get into the reading habit.



Don't fear change. We need to embrace new programs in our schools and communities. Good models: the Drop Everything and

Read program; KIPP Schools' 'carry a book at all times' rule; Sun Prairie Schools' switch from texts to trade books.

Boys are squirrely. Boys' differences in tastes need to be encouraged, not reprimanded. Too often, boy-appealing books like Guinness World Records or books with explosions and robots are disproportionately overlooked on schools' recommended-reading lists.

Be a reading role model. The best role models for reading are at home. Moms and dads, it's important that your kids see you reading.

Those in power should help. The Obamas, ESPN, NFL, or Hollywood could help if they start pressing the issue. The UK's World Book Day is a great example of those in power getting kids reading.

You can take action. Please "like" this statement on Facebook or send me a note. Once we have a million — or even 10 million! — people backing this statement, I want to write Washington, D.C., and others in power and get something done about this issue. But, even if you don't have a chance to do that, please go out, and pick out some great books for your kids. It's one of the most important, effective, and caring things you can do for a child.

web ... ReadKiddoRead.com
Author James Patterson's 10 Principles for Encouraging Children to Read

Curriculum



September 26th is Johnny Appleseed's birthday. Celebrate this special day with songs, poems, books, a map of his travels, where and why he planted his apple seeds and yes, his real name!

Begin your celebration with the "Happy Birthday" song, a book, a map, a KWL chart, apple tasting and graphing, apple printing to find the star in the middle or ???

Johnny Appleseed books:

- * Who Was Johnny Appleseed? by Joan Holub
- * Johnny Appleseed by Jane Kurtz
- * Johnny Appleseed by Steven Kellogg
- * Johnny Appleseed by Jodie Shepherd

Johnny Appleseed CD

- * Johnny Appleseed and Other American Legends by Melody Warnick



Johnny Appleseed Song
(tune: Peter Cottontail)
 Here comes Johnny Appleseed
 Apple seeds are all he needs
 Planting orchards
 on his way out west.
 Wears a pot upon his head
 Beneath the stars he makes
 his bed
 Folks say Johnny's apples
 are the best!

Johnny Appleseed Poem
 Johnny's Apple Deeds
 There was a man
 known for his deeds,
 They called him
 Johnny Appleseed.
 He Walked across
 the countryside,
 And orchards grew
 both far and wide.
 For as he went,
 he planted trees
 By dropping tiny
 apple seeds.
 John Chapman was
 his real name
 But apples were
 his claim to fame.



Apple Math
 Provide small slices of green, yellow and red apples for each child to taste. As each child decides on his/her favorite have them record this on a graph. Use colored dots for a small graph or apple cut outs for a larger graph. If you have an Ellison Die cutter use either the large or small apples.

When the graph is complete, discuss and record the results.



Apple Art/Literature
 Cut an apple in half crossways to expose the star in the middle. Use tempura paint to paint (be careful not to fill up the star with paint) or dip in paint spread in a shallow dish and then press gently (don't twist!) on a piece of paper to make an apple print. When dry use a crayon or marker to outline the star.

Note: For a picture of this project and the Little Red House story that goes with it go to the NKA web site, curriculum archives, September 2008

Apple Geography
 Trace Johnny Appleseed's path on a map with a dark marker and then color in the states with a lighter crayon.

Apple Science
 Discuss the fact that the apple seeds were planted near water. Why? Also, talk about the blossom, the role of bees in pollination and the fruit.

American Legends
 Separate fact from fiction by talking about the fact that Johnny Appleseed was a real person named John Chapman as opposed to perhaps Paul

Bunyan and Babe or Charlie Brown and Lucy, Linus, etc.

Apple Craft
 Make Johnny Appleseed pot hats! Cut a piece of black or gray construction paper in half lengthwise (12x18 = 6x18) Pre-K's can glue an apple on the strip, K's draw their favorite part of the story and 1's write one or more sentences about the legend. Then staple or glue into a circle and attach a pot handle.



More Apple Craft and Retelling a Story
 Have children make a small Johnny Appleseed as shown in the picture above (where books are listed) to take home for retelling the story. You may want to provide a small sheet of facts for adults to use as prompts!

"If a child cannot learn in the way we teach, we must teach in a way the child can learn."
 ~unknown

"Teachers have three loves: love of learning, love of learners, and the love of bringing the first two loves together."
 ~Scott Hayden



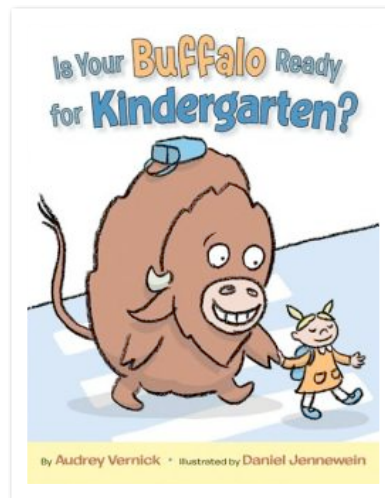
Children's Book Picks

Mom, It's My First Day of Kindergarten by Hyewon Yum. It's the first day of kindergarten, but who is worried about all the new people and the different things? The mother. In a reversal of roles, the child comforts and reassures mother that everything will be fine, she'll get used to him going to big-kid school, and yes, he is ready for the first day of kindergarten. Francis Foster Books, 2012.

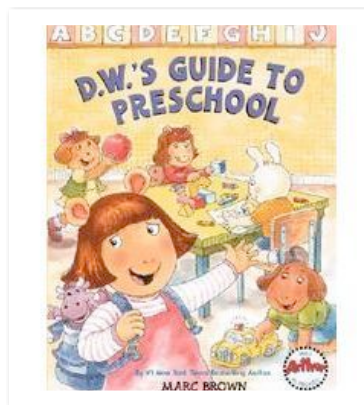


Is Your Buffalo Ready for Kindergarten? by by Audrey Vernick and Illustrated by Daniel Jennewein Your buffalo is growing up. He plays with friends. He shares his toys. He's smart! But is he ready for kindergarten? (And is kindergarten ready for him?) This is a hilarious look at first-

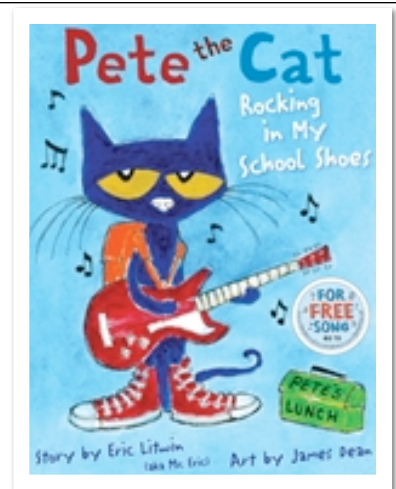
day-of-school jitters. Harper Collins, 2010



D.W.'s Guide to Preschool by Marc Brown D.W., Arthur's fun and sassy little sister is an old-hand at preschool and is very reassuring about how much fun it is! Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2003.



Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes by Eric Litwin, illustrated by James Dean Pete the Cat is back—and this time he's rocking in his school shoes. Pete discovers the library, the lunchroom, the playground, and lots of other cool places at school. And no matter where he goes, Pete never stops moving and grooving and singing his song . . . because it's all good. Harper Collins, 2011.



The Night Before First Grade by Natasha Wing. It's the night before the Big Day—first grade. Penny is excited to start the year with her best friend right beside her in the same classroom. This humorous take on Clement C. Moore's classic tale has a perfect twist ending that will surprise readers—as well as the “heroine” of the story—and help all about-to-be first-graders through their own back-to- school jitters. Penguin Group, 2005.



“Keep me away from the wisdom which does not cry, the philosophy which does not laugh and the greatness which does not bow before children.”
 ~Khalil Gibran



Teacher Web Sites

Curriculum and information:

www.learning4kids.net

for iPad apps google search

"free education apps"

WatchKnowLearn

TeacherTube

SchoolTube

GoogleEarth

iBooks

ImageSearcher

ShowMe

iWriteWordsLite

DoodleBuddy

MotionMath:HungryFish,v2.1

Free teacher resources:

TeachersCount.org

teacher.scholastic.com

ClassJump.com.

free.ed.gov

www.sitesforteachers.com

for help creating morning

messages that count and stick

[www.responsiveclassroom.org/](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/article/ideas-morning-meeting-mess)

[article/ideas-morning-meeting-](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/article/ideas-morning-meeting-mess)

[mess](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/article/ideas-morning-meeting-mess)

blogs:

drjean&friends.blogspot.com

heidisongs.blogspot.com

educationforyoungchildren.

blogspot.com

allfreeteacherresources.

blogspot.com

pre-kpages.com/blog

ms-artteacher.blogspot.com

dianeravitch.net/category/

childhood-pre-k-k

www.teacherspayteachers.com

When ordering/purchasing online from other teachers please remember to be respectful of copyrights!



Conferences

You may check any of the following web sites for conferences in your area. States and/or geographical locations have been designated and all others are national

AL ... akateacher.org

CA ... californiakindergarten association.org

CA ... SCKC.org

IL ... illinoisascd.org

MN ... mymka.org

ND... ndka.org

northwest ... nellieedge.com

TX ... ktot.org acei.org

drjean.org nabe.com

classroom.com/conferences

ncte.org nctm.org

naeyc.org/conferences

reading.org sde.com



Teacher Grant Opportunities

note: grant opportunities will be added/subtracted and printed

multiple times so give the list a once over each newsletter!

Abington Foundation

The Abington Foundation provides gifts for educational programs, particularly for development of programs that stress math readiness.

American Honda Foundation

The American Honda Foundation supports education with a specific focus on the areas of science, technology, engineering, math.

Braitmayer Foundation

The Braitmayer Foundation is interested in proposals featuring innovative practices in K-12 education throughout the United States. Of particular interest are curricular and school reform initiatives.

Bridgestone Firestone Trust Fund

The Bridgestone Firestone Trust Fund is dedicated to improving the lives of children, protecting the environment, and supporting education.

Brown Shoe Charitable Trust

This trust's commitment is to improve the communities where we live, work, and do business. Education is a priority.

Build-A-Bear Foundation

The foundation provides direct support for children in literacy and education programs such as summer reading, early childhood and children with special needs.

Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust

Grant-making activities in this

area are divided into three broad categories: elementary, secondary, and higher education.

Class Wish

This site empowers parents, educators and local communities to make a positive change in children's lives by providing them with the supplies they need. It's a way to engage the community while obtaining necessary items.

Dominion Educational Partnership Grants

Dominion accepts grant applications (up to \$10,000) to encourage the development of new programs to strengthen K-12 math and science education.

Dreyfus Foundation Educational Grants

Funding is available for many types of programs: after school, arts, at-risk/character, disabilities, general education, health/physical education, math, reading, science/ environment, social studies, and special education.

Hall Family Foundation

This grant promotes excellence in elementary and secondary education.

Halliburton Foundation

The foundation serves nonprofits in the areas of education, health and social services.

ING Unsung Heroes

Grants are given to K-12 educators utilizing new teaching methods and techniques that improve learning.

William T. Kemper Foundation

Primary interest areas for this

foundation are children and youth, community development, neighborhood development, the environment, philanthropy, and volunteerism.

Limeades for Learning

This effort supports a variety of programs and is teacher motivated.

Target Early Childhood Reading Grants

This grant seeks to foster a love of reading and encourages children, preschool through third grade, to read together with their families.

Teacher's Pet

Grant tip geared specifically toward teachers smaller projects

Toshiba America Foundation

The mission of Toshiba America Foundation is to promote quality science and mathematics education in US schools.



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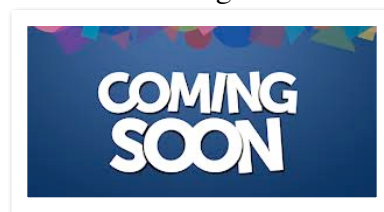
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AL Kindergarten Conference
Art Teaches - California
Central Florida Kdgn Alliance
Delta Phi Upsilon - National
Frog Street Press - Texas
jbecker - SIU - Carbondale
Kindergarten Teachers of Texas
Minnesota Kindergarten Assn.



KToT (Kindergarten Teachers of Texas) 30th Annual State Conference, November 2nd, Omni Houston, Westside, 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. For more info contact Lizanne McDaniel, KToT President: lizanne@austin.rr.com