

The Groupie

ELI Group Program Newsletter
Spring '07

Spring Sparkle

Welcome Back! We hope you are all enjoying the wonderful activities, holidays and weather that Spring has to offer. Group teachers are taking the opportunity to do some of our own Spring Cleaning at ELI. This not only includes cleaning out our closets, but also adding some new sparkle to the group program!

The group room is in the process of getting a bit of a make-over. Slowly but surely we will be adding a Tech N' Tot station in the class room. This will be an area that will be primarily devoted to exploration through play with low tech and high tech toys and equipment. This will be fun for all, but especially designed to help support the access to play and language opportunities for children with challenging communication and motor differences.

Starting in May, some of the groups will also be extending their play times. The 11:00 Tuesday Wee Play group will be extended to end at 12:30. The extra time will allow for children to take part in more challenging and structured activities that will provide for more problem solving and social opportunities through play such as cooking, obstacle courses, and multi- stepped movement games.

The Building Blocks and Bridges group that is currently offered on Thursdays will expand its play time to 10:00-11:30.

This will allow for more time for families to discuss developmental and parenting concerns and to make connections with each other.

Playgroup Themes **The Child and the Wild**



Some of the themes in group that will be explored through play will be focused on **WILD ANIMALS!** This will range from zoo animals at the ELI site to dinosaurs at the Steele Lane group.

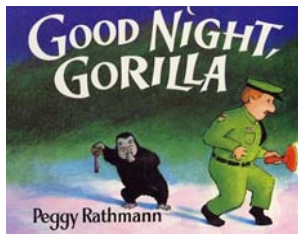
This theme provides great opportunities for play that reaches into each developmental domain:

- *Gross Motor: Move like an animal!
Great big dinosaur stomping to snake slithering to kangaroo hopping
- *Speech and Language: Use your voice and ...roar like a lion, bellow like a buffalo, hiss like a snake. Sing "Old MacDonald had a Zoo", "3 Little Monkeys Swingin' in a Tree", "Goin' on a Dino Hunt"
- *Sensory and fine motor: Scoop and dig for dinosaur fossils in the sand, make animal prints in play dough or paint, and then give your animals a good bubble bath washing after all that!
- *Pre-literacy: Make your own animal

book by drawing, or with magazine cut-outs; let your child "read" to you by pointing, labeling and/or using sounds when looking at pictures; read the same book and/or sing the same song over and over and over and over and over and over again! And then over again! These are just a few ideas of what your child may do at group, and/or what you can do at home. One can easily see that while kids are "just playing" they are also doing a lot of learning!!

Theme Book Recommendations:

- Good Night, Gorilla** by Peggy Rathmann
- Hug** by Jez Alborough
- Polar Bear, Polar Bear What Do You Hear?** by Eric Carle
- Touch and Feel Wild Animals** published by DK
- This Is Not My Dinosaur** by Fiona Watt
- How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight?** by Jane Yolen and Mark Teague



Recipe of the Month:

goop

One box corn starch and a bowl or shallow tray with a lip- Pour cornstarch into your bowl or tray and add a little over a cup of water slowly. Stir to make mixture goopy but not runny. Add color if desired. You can hide animals/dinosaurs in the goop.



An Opportunity to Help ELI

The Human Race Fundraiser is coming up in May! This is ELI's main opportunity to raise money that goes directly toward services, activities and equipment for *your* child. Please think of a way you can help support our goal of raising \$15,000. You can donate directly, volunteer, or ask friends, family or business associates to sponsor an ELI runner or walker. Every dollar counts in helping us to strengthen our programs that provide support for young children in Sonoma County. Most importantly, please bring your kids and come and join us for a fun and friendly group walk on Race Day! For more information please call 591-0170.

Congratulations Spring Graduates !



- Ava! Owen!
- Gavin! Kaileah!
- Uri! Selene!

Upcoming Dates to Remember:

- April 27: 10:00-11:00 Parent to Parent Support and Info Meeting at ELI
- May 4: Two School Guitar Fiesta at ELI
- May 5: Cinco de Mayo
- May 12: Human Race at Herbert Slater Middle School
- May 13: Mother's Day
- May 25: 10:00-11:00 Parent to Parent Support and Info Meeting at ELI
- May 28: Memorial Day Holiday—No Group