



Newsletter – December 2009

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Upcoming Events

- ◆ **Jan. 6:** School resumes after winter break
- ◆ **Jan. 18:** Martin Luther King Day, no school
- ◆ **Jan. 23:** Winter cleanup, 9 a.m.
- ◆ **Feb. 9:** General meeting, 7-7:45 p.m.; 2s and 3s class meetings 6:30-7 p.m.; 4s class meetings, 7:45-8:15 p.m.
- ◆ **Feb. 15:** Presidents Day, no school
- ◆ **April 2:** Spring break, no school.
- ◆ **April 12:** School resumes

Message from the President

Dear Friends,

I'm writing to you as the Rudolph cookies are in the oven and I'm supervising my son stamp Christmas cards to give as teacher gifts, while I'm also searching for my babysitter's number on the iPhone so my husband and I can get out to do some last-minute shopping. Sometimes in December, I fall into bed at night and wonder "How did my life get so busy and hectic? Is this really what Christmas represents for me and my family?" Perhaps you feel like I do.

Well this year, I challenge myself and you to do the holidays differently. Let's commit to slow down and enjoy the people that make our lives so special in December but also January through November. Maybe this

means planning a "cocoa date" with our preschooler at the kitchen table or a family sledding adventure up Millcreek Canyon. It could imply an afternoon spent ice skating or an hour cuddling on the sofa reading Christmas stories. Let's make shorter lists, skip a couple events, and instead of running into school buddies at Target or the mall, I hope I bump into you pink-cheeked standing beside your family's snowman.

Happy holidays!

Amy Hall
President
CCNS

Picture Perfect!

Have pictures from field trips, on the playground or in the classrooms? The CCNS newsletter will feature photo pages throughout the school year. Send your pictures to Joe Gillespie at loriandjoegillespie@hotmail.com or to Deanna Simonis at vegandeanna@yahoo.com

Supporting the Primary Co-oper – From Home

By Lindsay Hinton

We all have different family dynamics: Some of us are single parents, others reside in separate households, and some share the home but can't share the co-oping load. This story is for those of us that can't share the load, with some additional suggestions for single households.

Co-oping is a wonderful way to be involved with our awesome teachers and kiddos, but is also just that: very *involved*. Being really involved requires a time commitment that not everyone has. Here are ways to help your partner/friend if you don't have time to support the primary co-oper for the family through the classroom.

- Hit the store to pick-up snacks or juice for the classroom co-oper.
- Fill out all the necessary forms, unless you are like Misty and really love those things!
- Be active on the committee your family chooses.
- Participate in the clean-up day, or give the primary co-oper those hours of adult time, if that is something he or she would like.
- See if there is any way you can

adjust your schedule or take a lunch hour to pick up or drop off your kid at school once or twice a week.

- Take charge of packing the backpack with your kiddo the night before heading to school.

Help your child pick out show-and-tell item for school.

If you are a single parent, think about asking a friend to carpool, swap babysitting or even donate some babysitting, or cover an extra classroom day. Hit the store with a friend to stock up on juice and snacks.

As a household with two full-time working parents, we have found ourselves needing some support from other co-ops in the classroom, and amazingly, someone was always right there – you just have to ask. We are surrounded by an amazing group of people; we can all lean on each other if we know who needs the support.

Any way you can jump in and contribute to all things CCNS, the more fun you will have, along with your family. Knowing that the non-classroom co-oper is taking some time to get involved helps get the kids excited, as well helps the primary co-oper feel supported. Support is such an excellent way to show each other how much we care.

Cures for Cabin Fever

By Adriana Costello-Martin

Don't you think it such a lame device when authors or speakers begin an essay or speech with a definition? I completely agree, but I'm going to do it anyway!

Cabin fever: Distress, anxiety or irritability caused by prolonged confinement in a small or remote place, as in *We've been snowed in for a week and everyone has cabin fever*. Originating in the West, this term at first alluded to being penned up in a remote cabin during a long winter but has since been applied more broadly. [Late 1800s] (www.dictionary.com)

Perhaps it hasn't set in yet, with the freshness of the snow, the busyness of the season, the scurrying and preparing for celebrations, the visiting of friends, relatives, cousins ... but come January, it will! After the holiday eating has done its damage, the company has gone home, the decorations are put away and the new toys are lost, broken or forgotten, those cold, dark winter days at home with small children really start to have an impact. At least the daylight has the decency to stick around a minute longer each day as the year progresses!

The fact that I am writing about avoiding cabin fever does not mean I am any kind of expert on the topic! As the mom of two teens, a preschooler and a 3-month-old, I have explored the Web a little and scrounged around in the corners of my brain for some ideas I've picked up over the years to share with you. This is a very short, very incomplete list, but hopefully will be a springboard for your own creativity, or provide some quick relief in a pinch:

- I read somewhere that sorting laundry, matching clean socks and helping with cooking and baking are all supposed to help kids with math skills.
- A co-worker and I were chatting about depression recently, and she told me about a recommendation to have a live,

green, growing plant in the main living areas of the house to help combat the blues and SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder). It certainly seems like it could apply to cabin fever, as well!

- Play dates. We all have a whole classroom full of potential play date mates, complete with a list of names and phone numbers on the co-op calendar.
- Parents need play dates, too. Coffee shops, bookstores, cafes, and other public places can be a place for parents to gather while the preschooler is at his or her own play date! Or, share the play date. While the youngsters occupy themselves in the playroom, parents can chat over tea.
- More great ideas from parents smarter than me:
 - <http://www.momscape.com/articles/indoor-activities-for-kids.htm>
 - <http://simplemom.net/20-indoor-activities-for-kids-besides-tv/>
- Public Libraries have great, free programs for kids, as well as books full of indoor activity ideas:
 - <http://www.slcppl.lib.ut.us/index.jsp>
 - <http://www.slco.lib.ut.us/>
 - <http://www.murraylibrary.org/>
- The King's English hosts "Storytime at TKE" Thursday, Friday & Saturday @ 11 (www.kingsenglish.com). The big chain bookstores have story times, too. Check their websites for further info.

Resources for Wintertime Reading

By Amy Brandt

December is the perfect month for holiday stories, and many families have their favorite read-alouds for Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa. Sometimes, overlooked are stories about the season itself, those that celebrate snow and cold, as well as the fun to be had playing in it. Below are some favorite winter books to look for the next time you are at the library. Many of them are just the right length to share with toddlers.

Brett, Jan. *The Mitten*.
 Briggs, Raymond. *Snowman*.
 Burton, Virginia Lee. *Katy and the Big Snow*.
 Carle, Eric. *Dream Snow*.
 Ehlert, Lois. *Snowballs*.
 Henkes, Kevin. *Oh!*
 Keats, Ezra Jack. *The Snowy Day*.
 Kellogg, Steven. *The Missing Mitten Mystery*.
 Root, Phyllis. *Grandmother Winter*.
 Schaefer, Carole Lexa. *Snow Pumpkin*.
 Schertle, Alice. *All You Need For a Snowman*.
 Shulevitz, Uri. *Snow*.
 Siddals, Mary McKenna. *Millions of Snowflakes*.
 Stojic, Manya. *Snow*.
 Van Laan, Nancy. *When Winter Comes*.
 Waddell, Martin. *Snow Bears*.

Try these wintertime action rhymes with your child! (Italics indicate what action you should do to accompany the rhyme.)

Melting Snowman

I am a snowman (*stand with arms wide*)

Standing in the lawn

The sun comes out (*make a circle with your arms*)

I melt and melt and melt and melt (*bend your knees and sink closer to the ground*)

And pretty soon I'm gone. (*collapse in a puddle on the ground*)

Chubby Little Snowman

A chubby little snowman (*puff out cheeks*)

With a carrot nose (*point to nose*)

Along comes a bunny (*hold up two fingers and make them hop*)

And what do you suppose? (*hold up hands in questioning way*)

Hungry little bunny (*rub tummy*)

Looking for his lunch (*hold hand up above eyes and search*)

Ate that little snowman's nose (*pretend to grab at nose*)

Nibble, nibble crunch! (use hands to pretend to eat, then clap on "crunch")

Also, if you're looking for ideas for books to give as presents, check out the Guide Book to Gift Books

(<http://bccb.lis.illinois.edu/gb2/index.html>).

It is an annual resource published by the staff of the Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, a highly respected children's book review journal, based at the University of Illinois.

The American Booksellers Association also has a list of book recommendations from independent booksellers across the country. The Kids' Indie Next List for Winter can be found at: <http://www.indiebound.org/kids-indie-next-list>.

Hill Air Force Base Aerospace Museum

By Deanna Simonis

For those with children interested in airplanes, visiting the Hill Air Force Base Aerospace Museum, located approximately 40 miles north of Salt Lake City in Roy, likely will be a fun and educational family excursion. We went in late October and were able to enjoy both the extensive indoor exhibits, housed in two enormous hangars, as well as the accessible outdoor collection that includes a B-52 bomber and several other equally large and impressive aircraft.

Once inside the museum, visitors are greeted with a comprehensive collection of flight suits and uniforms that fill a room just off the lobby. From the lobby, museum patrons can access the indoor hangars that house the majority of the museum's 80 military aircraft (it seems like far more) and related vehicles and equipment, as well as thousands of other artifacts.

Included in the collection are notable aircraft such as: a replica of the original Wright 1903 flyer, an enormous combat helicopter known as the Jolly Green Giant, and a Lockheed Blackbird (the world's fastest airplane). However, our son's favorite aircraft was the Bell Sioux helicopter that, with its small size, clear bubble canopy and light metal

frame, looks like a dragonfly about to take flight.

It's easy to admire the impressive array of machinery filling the hangars and lined up on the dirt outside and, for a moment, forget the use to which most of the aircraft were put. However, eventually my 4-year-old asked what, exactly, was the purpose of the ball-shaped gun turret bulging from the belly of a B-17. That led to an interesting conversation on the topic of war that, admittedly, is heavy for a preschooler. Still, he took it all in stride and decided that he'd pretend the gunners were shooting marshmallows, not bullets. Our 2-year-old was less impressed with the exhibits and no doubt was a bit young to appreciate the museum.

The museum is open from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. every day, closing only on New Year's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Admission is free, although donations are welcome. To reach the museum drive north on I-15 to exit 338 (in Roy), and enter through the gate. No gate pass is required.

For more information, visit the museum's website at <http://www.hill.af.mil/library/museum/>

‘You’ve Sunk My Battleship!’

By Joe Gillespie

Playing board games with your children, even your preschooler, can be a fun activity. A new generation of games (some that don’t even use a board at all) is aimed at preschoolers more than ever before. Some of these new favorites in our house include Feed the Kitty, Hiss and The Curse of the Ruby Rhino – all without much strategy, but perfect to reinforce colors, counting, taking turns and basic gameplay. You may find some of these new classics at a chain toy or department store, but your best bet is to check out local businesses such as Tutoring Toy, Red Balloon and Game Night for a less mainstream selection.

But what about the old classics, the board games we parents played as children? Of course, some such as Monopoly or Risk will be too difficult for preschoolers, but many others are suitable or can be adapted for kids younger than 5. Nostalgic parents and their kids can have fun together playing these classics.

A few things to remember:

- Of course, let your kids win whenever you can – but not all the time. Not winning is a good life lesson at this age, and with some games, luck won’t always be with your preschooler. But if possible, try to end your sessions with your child the winner of the last game.
- Don’t be afraid to adapt rules to make the game easier for your preschooler. Though learning and following rules is important, at this age, you need to keep it fun, so if your child wants a few extra Yahtzee rolls, it’s not the end of the world.
- Remember, some of these games have little pieces, so if you are playing with a child younger than 3, keep an eye out that no game pieces end up in his or her mouth.
- Playing in teams can be a big help with complex games. You can make the strategy decisions, while you let your child roll the dice and move the pieces.

- The phrase “They don’t make them like the used to” really applies to board games. You will be surprised how cheaply made today’s Sorry! and Battleship are. Thus, if you see an old classic at a garage sale, pick it up – you might be happier with the quality of the older game.
- Finally, be aware of the vast array of product tie-ins that have permeated the board game market. Do we really need a Spongebob SquarePants version of Connect Four? Unless your child really loves Dora so much he or she would flip over a Dora Candy Land, stick to the classic versions of these classic games.

Here are some of the classic games you can enjoy with your preschooler:

Candy Land, Memory, Cootie, Chutes and Ladders: Years later, these games still are favorites with preschoolers. There’s no special advice to give on playing these with your children – the games are still simple enough for kids younger than 5. Note that Candy Land has expanded its franchise into a few other preschool games beyond the original.

Sorry! The game’s concept is simple: Pick a card, move your pieces, draw a Sorry! card to send an opponent back to the start. The big number on cards will appeal to preschoolers, as will shouting “Sorry!” But this game is also good at teaching patience (remember, you need a 1 or 2 to get out) and graceful setbacks (when your child is a victim of a Sorry! card). Note, not all the numbers have a player moving ahead (e.g., 4, which directs you backward, or 11, in which you can switch with an opponent), so be prepared to forego those rules and simply moving whatever number comes up.

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Classic Board Games

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Trouble, Aggravation, Parcheesi: These games follow the same basic idea as Sorry! – Move your pieces around the board and don't get landed on. Trouble is especially fun with its popper in the middle of the game board that rolls the dice (be ready to help your child push the popper down if needed).

Yahtzee: Preschoolers might not get all the strategy involved, but they will love rolling the dice. For slightly older kids, you can ask them what number they want to go for on their second and third rolls. And be sure to yell “Yahtzee!” when you get five of a kind. To add colors to the mix, look for Kismet, which uses dice with black, green and red pips.

Battleship: On the surface (ugh, couldn't resist the joke), this classic naval combat game might seem too complex for a 5-year-old. But with some help from a parent, Battleship can be fun. Your child might not understand the strategy, but he or she can discover what coordinates are being fired upon and yell “hit” or “miss,” as well as pegging the board. Be forewarned – a Battleship game involving a preschooler takes awhile. If your opponent is willing, the game can be helped along by subtle recommendations on where to attack (“Joe, I heard the zoo has three elephants” can stand for E-3). Finally, today's Battleship is much different than the versions from the past – gone are the red and blue boxes, replaced with one upright structure that gets pegged on both sides (and the pegs don't stay in very well). If you see an old version at a garage sale, it's worth the 50 cents to buy it.

Pass the Pigs: No board, just pigs. If you don't play the hog calling rule, Pass the Pigs, though devoid of strategy, can be roll-in-the-mud fun.

Scrabble Junior: Unlike the grown-up version, Scrabble Junior already has words on its board – players simply add the letters to spell them out. I remember being an 8-year-old and thinking that was boring, but for a 4-year-old, spelling words themselves can feel like quite an

accomplishment. Scrabble Junior is a great classic letter game; be sure to embrace the teaching moment by spelling out your own words on the other, blank side of the game board.

Mousetrap: You'll be helping your preschooler plenty on this game, but the payoff is watching the mousetrap actually work. And let's face it – that was the best part of the game (does anybody even remember the gameplay on Mousetrap?).

Guess Who? Older preschoolers should be able to handle Guess Who?, in which players try to guess their opponent's secret person, but younger ones will need some assistance (this is another game in which teaming up with your child will help). When asking an attribute about your opponent's secret person, tell your child to flip down the right cards (e.g., “Flip down everyone wearing a hat.”).

Othello: Though Othello is easy enough for a preschooler to learn, it's a game you'll have to really overlook your own strategy for your child to have fun. In other words, let your kid have the corners ...

Bonkers!, Stay Alive, Star Wars: Escape From the Death Star: These three old board games are strictly garage sale/thrift store/eBay finds (though Stay Alive has made a comeback with a smaller game board). Bonkers! involves crazy back-and-forth counting of spaces across the board; Stay Alive is a classic Milton Bradley marble game; and the Star Wars game requires simple spin-and-move-your-pieces gameplay and was the coolest game to own in 1978. These are three fun games I remember; if you still own or find ones from your past (and a great resource for old games is www.boardgamegeek.com), don't be afraid to assess whether you can play them with your own kids. And if not, find another game to play with them. After all – it's not just the game, but the time together that's important.