



## THE SOUTH SHORE NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER



### Nature Center Preschool News

January 2014

Happy New Year! The staff of Nature Center Preschool wishes all of our families a terrific new year with many opportunities to get outside and explore! Nature Center Preschool is starting 2014 with the theme "What's Happening in Winter". We will look at the changes in our backyard and discover where some of our warm weather animal friends have gone and what plants do during these cold months.

Enrollment for Fall 2014 has begun for current Nature Center Preschool families and siblings! Registration paperwork will be sent home in cubbies. If you do not receive a registration please ask your Teachers or Preschool Director, Diane, for a copy!

## Swim

The NCP swim instruction program at the Emilson Branch of SSYMCA begins a new session starting January 6th and goes through February 13<sup>th</sup>.

Storm closing information for Nature Center Preschool can be found at:

<http://ssymca.org/>

On the front page under "Announcements"

## Did you know?



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## Family Advisory Council News!

Thank you to all families for your outpouring of generosity in supporting the Friends of the Homeless on the South Shore Holiday Gift Drive! In speaking with some of the NCP families that donated to the drive, it was clear that the gifts were given from the heart as if they were members of your own families!

### Dates in January

**Jan 2** Classes resume

**Jan 2** Registration for Fall 2014 begins

**Jan 6** New swim session begins

**Jan 20 MLK Day—no school**

**Jan 20** SSNSC Penguin Pajama party

**Jan 25** Summer Camp Open House

**Jan 26** SSNSC Alligator and Crocodile Show

## Nature Notes

How do trees survive the winter?

Trees go through a process similar to hibernation called dormancy, and that is what keeps them alive during the winter.

Dormancy is like hibernation in that everything within the plant slows down. Metabolism, energy consumption, growth and so on. The first part of dormancy is when trees lose their leaves. They don't make food in the winter, so they have no use for masses of leaves that would require energy to maintain.

Excerpted from <http://www.mnn.com/local-reports/illinois/local-blog/how-do-trees-get-through-the-winter>

### January areas of Learning!

- **Science:** Winter weather changes, hibernation, torpor, dormancy, naturalist visits, observation skills
- **Gross motor:** Trail walks, field play, indoor music and movement activities
- **Language:** Literature selections—*The Mitten* by Jan Brett, *The Jacket I Wear in the Snow* by Shirley Neitzel,
- **Math:** Temperature and precipitation measurement, patterning, number sense
- **Visual Arts:** “The Snowy Day” by Ezra Jack Keats
- **Music:** Positional words through music



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## Parent Involvement in Early Literacy

Reprinted from

<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/parent-involvement-in-early-literacy-erika-burton>

## Parent Involvement: What Skills Need to be Part of a Daily Routine?

Parent involvement in early literacy is directly connected to academic achievement. Children need parents to be their reading role models with daily practice in order to navigate successfully through beginning literacy skills. According to research, parents should focus on the words on the page while reading with their preK reader (Evans, Shaw, Bell, 2000).

Here are some strategies for beginning and seasoned readers' literacy success:

- **Point to each word on the page as you read.** This beginning literacy strategy will assist children with making print/story/illustration connections. This skill also helps build a child's tracking skills from one line of text to the next one.
- **Read the title and ask your child to make a prediction.** Beginning and seasoned readers alike need to make predictions before reading a story. This will go a long way to ensure that a child incorporates previewing and prediction in his or her own reading practices both now and in the future.
- **Take "picture walks."** Help your child use the picture clues in most early readers and picture books to tell the story before reading.
- **Model fluency while reading, and bring your own energy and excitement for reading to your child.** Both new and seasoned readers struggle with varying pitch, intonation and proper fluctuations when they read aloud. Older readers will benefit from shared reading (taking turns).

- **Ask your child questions after reading every book.** Reading comprehension is the reason we read -- to understand. The new [CCORE standards](#) assessing U.S. children's readiness for the workplace and college ask children at all grade levels to compare and contrast their understanding of concepts. This takes practice. Help your child explain his or her understanding of any given story in comparison to another. Have your child share a personal experience similar to a problem or theme within a story. Higher-order thinking skills (critical thinking) are skills children are expected to use in both written and oral assessments in school. There is no way for a teacher to ask every child to use a critical thinking skill every day. Parents can.
- **Connect reading and writing if possible.** The connection between reading, writing and discussion should be incorporated with daily literacy practice. Have a young child dictate to a parent who writes in a journal or on a sheet of paper. Modeling the formation of sentences aligned with the words of a story is crucial for a child to begin making a neural interconnectedness between reading and writing. A child's process of drawing pictures brings his or her personal creativity toward the story. Sharing these illustrations of experiences and individual interpretations related to the sentence he or she has created on the page is yet another step toward this early balanced literacy approach.



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