



CFIS Newsletter

December
2017 &
January
2018

IPC THEME: TRANSPORTATION

Transport-er-ing-ed

by Mr. Jesse

Children are always up for going somewhere, they love riding buses, trains and the car. We do this all the time without even batting an eyelid but for kids, it's absolutely everything. Going anywhere is exciting. When you say to the kids that we're going to the playground after lunch, they say "I went to the park with my mum and dad". They can be eating lunch and someone will say "I went to Disneyland" and the entire class will pipe up and say the same thing.

At the recent seminar we attended, Daniel Hodgins pinpointed the idea that "every day is a new day" for kids. Mostly children are living from one experience to the next or really one moment to the next. Interestingly though, they do usually know about the car mum and dad drive! They know about the train, especially in Japan and they know a little about airplanes too. Many of the kids at our school have

already travelled several times on an airplane as well.

For this theme, classes will look at things like road signs; they will sing songs about different modes of transport, children will make up their own kinds of vehicles and learn about traffic road safety too. Classes will also categorize air, land and water transportation. Throughout this theme we will try to find details in the subject of "getting around" that children can relate to.

Together with the change of theme, in December we will also be busy preparing for our Christmas party. This year, like always, will go out with a bang as we take to the stage one more time. Performing is a tricky thing to teach kids. Many kids like the idea of performing but they don't know what they'll feel like until they get on the stage. Little kids are especially unpredictable but when things go

mostly according to plan there is a sense of satisfaction that the kids were able to get up there and do it. After doing this for many years, I feel comfortable to let go when the children are finally on the stage and let to perform. I am happy to see what experience will unravel and I like to watch the ones that were loud and energetic during practice become shy and sometimes the reverse happens too! Over the years I have been trying to find performances for my own classes that fit their dynamic. I know all classes at school do the same thing and very well too. This year we have many volunteer costume helpers so we are looking forward to seeing the children up on stage in their fantastic costumes. See you all soon!

Jesse

Preschool

by Ms. Jam, Ms. Aya & Ms. Shoko

We can't believe that it's already December and it's almost the beginning of a new year. Time flies when you are having fun and that's exactly how we feel in Preschool. It's been a joy to watch your children learn, laugh and grow since the beginning of the year and there is still a lot more of it to come in the three months that are left in the school year.

Last month, we finished our Pattern/Dinosaur theme by capping it off with a trip to the dinosaur restaurant where the students thoroughly enjoyed looking at different dinosaurs before lunch. They still want to play with the dinosaurs even now. We also got a chance to enjoy the beautiful autumn leaves. Students were tasked with collecting leaves, pinecones and acorns to use for arts and craft inside the classroom.

There are so many major activities and events planned yet again for December and January. We will be starting a new IPC theme: Transportation. Students will be learning about different

transportation that people use to travel on land, sea and in the air. We will also learn basic traffic signal such as stop and go.

The students will be able to play with different kinds of transportation during free play. During circle time, students will learn the names of means of transportation such as car, bus, train, airplane, ship etc. We will also watch some video clips to further increase our knowledge and sing related songs.

Lastly, we are planning field trips that coincide with this theme to gain hands-on, real life experience.

During December and January we will also celebrate and learn about seasonal themes such as Christmas and winter. We will decorate the classroom with Christmas ornaments, put up and decorate our Preschool Christmas tree and we will also have some preschool-



appropriate Christmas and winter math & science activities.

Lastly, we look forward to our big Christmas performance and cannot wait to show it to you all. We hope that you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

UPCOMING PRESCHOOL EVENTS

December 20th – Class Christmas party

December 22nd – Christmas Party

Dec. 23rd - Jan. 9th – Winter break

No birthday celebrants in Preschool in December and January



SOME SHOTS FROM LAST MONTH

**Art**

Painting our leaves during art

**Gym**

Mr. Yu meeting the kids right at the limit of their skills in gym class

**Free play**

My baby is a ball!

UPCOMING K3 EVENTS

- December 8th – Aito and Kenji's birthday party
- December 22nd – Christmas party
- Dec. 23rd-Jan 9th – Winter break
- January 26th - Kazuki and Aiyana's birthday party

K3

by Mr. Jesse & Ms. White

Without even knowing it

One of the things I really like about an open curriculum like the one we apply is the idea that we simply immerse the children in an idea and watch to see if it reflects in their work and play. Observing the children connect with patterns and then take note of whether they start commenting on colors, numbers and shapes they see, to me is fascinating. Ms. White and I are very pleased with how the previous theme went.

The Craft Basket

From the beginning of this theme, Ms. White and I opened up the craft basket for kids to use in the mornings and on some afternoons. I very much like the idea of an unguided free craft session where children just take craft supplies and use them. I'm also very interested in how the language that we use, as the kids work on some sort of creation helps them define what they are doing. I try not to ask "what is it?" but rather comment on what objects they are using, if things are taped or stuck, whether they have used markers or not, their color choice. Things of that nature. The reason I do this is because I don't want to limit the possibilities of what the creation could be nor do I want to decide for them. At first when they start, they usually do not know what they want to make and so instead I focus on the mechanics and techniques they are applying to make their project. We very much enjoy seeing the kids deep in concentration at the tables when they are making something. Every now and then, I will make a suggestion, or write something for someone if they want but usually this activity is 100% child centered.

Open ended use of language and validation first

Something else that has been fascinating me is the use of a simple technique that validates the child's achievement first and then possibly praises them. I see praise still as important, but for open ended endeavors and in particular when children are on the verge of mastering a skill, validation and recognition seem to be more sincere and powerful motivating tools. K3 kids are now all nearly able to write their names and when they come to me after morning pencil time I have been saying "wow, you can write your name now" and they reply "I can write my name". It may sound trivial but when I capture this moment it seems that anything in life is possible for them.

Transport

Another theme that kids usually thoroughly enjoy is this one. Apart from looking at all kinds of vehicles, we also want to apply it to our lives. Who comes to school by bus? How would you get to the park? Can we fly a plane to the shopping center? Where can you ride a boat too? I will try and give the children visual scenarios for them to imagine. Of course in K3 we will introduce the names of many modes of transport but we will also try to find what the children already know; then meet them where it applies to their lives.

We had a few songs during the previous patterns theme but now with transport, a whole bunch of songs that the kids are already probably familiar with come up again. Here's to the new theme and see you all soon!

K4

by Ms. Kat, Ms. Cristina & Ms. Aida

Winter is almost here. You can smell it in the air, feel it on your skin when you go out and see it when you visit shops: everyone is getting ready for Christmas! Our class does not stay behind with all the preparations. We have already decorated our "pink room" with a winter theme, put up a Christmas tree and soon our little, but very skillful, K4 elves will start preparing gifts for mom and dad. Just a heads up- they will ask you if you've been good so get ready with your answers. Here are some class activity highlights for December and January:

Math

We have been reviewing numbers from 0 to 20. Kids are getting very good at simple additions to 20 and because of that we have recently decided to also add bigger numbers to our math games and plays. Most of our kids can read numbers to 100 correctly! Now it's time for subtractions. As usual, we will take it easy at first and start with small numbers and very easy equations.

Science

For people who come from cold places winter is always associated with snow, icicles, frost... So much fun for kids! In this part of Japan we don't get to see a lot of snow. So, to make winter look better we decided we are going to experiment and create a lot of fake snow. We will be using cornstarch, shaving cream, ice cubes, cottons and other things kids think might look like snow or can make snow. Also, as a part of our science experiments we will try to bake cookies in the cooking studio. If we succeed you will be able to taste them before Christmas :)

Ballet

All our ballet classes are focused on the Christmas performance. Children are preparing a wonderful piece with beautiful music and dancing. Hope you will enjoy watching!

Language Arts

We have just ordered new books for our reading center. We will have a lot of new and exciting stories about winter, snowmen and Christmas. That means we will be spending a long time reading to and with the children. As a consequence we will have more quizzes, listening comprehension games and more chances to get stickers on sticker boards!

Japanese

Ms. Mizuho is planning to introduce Chinese Zodiac signs to the kids. She will show them a story about the zodiac animals that explains why there are only 12 of them and why those particular animals. Children will make traditional Japanese New Year cards, Nengajo, and learn a New Year song. They will be also talking about winter and our IPC theme, transportation. The next hiragana characters to master are: ya, yu, yo, wa, wo and n.

Cooking

As mentioned above we will have a cooking/baking activity in December. We will make an attempt to bake gingerbread man cookies.

We hope you will all be able to join the Christmas Performance and enjoy watching with us!

May you all share joyful memories, laughter and good cheer with your loved ones on this Christmas and New Year.

SOME SHOTS FROM LAST MONTH



Thankfulness Party

What are you thankful for?



Music

Reviewing note values with Ms. Lisa



Christmas coming up!

Christmas is getting closer and this week we put up our Christmas tree in the classroom

UPCOMING K4 EVENTS

- December 8th – Ririco, Kosei, Hirona, Sofia and Jayce's birthday party
- December 13th and 14th – Cooking
- December 22nd – Christmas Party
- Dec. 23rd-Jan 9th – Winter break
- January 26th – Rosa and Kei's birthday party

SOME SHOTS FROM LAST MONTH



Patterns

Putting different kinds of patterns on paper



Library visit

We had a great time visiting the library on Atsugi base, listening to Ms. Maria's stories and then reading on our own



Autumn leaves

We collected colorful leaves at the park and then used them for our diary page.

K5

by Ms. Norah & Ms. Mizuho

We can already hear the jingle bells ringing!

The holiday season is upon us and K5 is getting into the spirit. We will soon be putting up our Christmas tree in the classroom, and plan to celebrate a few other special events as well. One of these will be the K5 class Christmas Party, which will be the chance for the students to experience some Christmas traditions such as Kris Kringle, where the children exchange surprise gifts with one another, and singing Christmas carols.

Our major event in December is the CFIS Christmas Party in which all the students will be showcasing their ballet and class performances. Santa will also be dropping by to hand out presents. All of the K5 students have shown great cooperation, grit, responsibility, gratefulness and kindness throughout the year.

New theme: Transportation

In December and January, the children will be exploring the new theme of Transportation. This theme is an easy one for the students to relate to, as transportation is part of everyone's daily life. Some students are being driven to school, while others walk. Most of the students, if not all, have ridden a bus or a train, or taken an airplane. These experiences will bring life to the theme and the familiarity they already have with the topic will help the students stay engaged.

Some of the activities and crafts we are planning for this theme are:

- Learning about and making traffic lights and road signs
- Making a papier mache hot air balloon

- Having a transportation-themed Show and Tell
- Creating their original means of transportation and later talking about it in front of the class
- Discussing about how we travel on land, water and in the air

Language Arts

After almost a year of phonics and spelling tests, the results are starting to show. The students have shown an increased interest in reading, and their confidence in reading report keeps building. It has given us great satisfaction to see them try their best to read as many books as they can and being so eager to borrow books that they can bring home.

Math

We will be mastering and reviewing both addition and subtraction. For addition, we will continue practicing adding numbers with multiple digits and using addition to solve word problems. We will be using word problems to practice basic subtractions as well.

Ballet

The children are now mastering the rhythmical exercises they have been learning throughout the year, as well as practicing their dance routine for their Christmas performance.

Swimming

The coaches are working on developing the children's strength in water and on breathing techniques. Swimming in deep water is a regular part of the lessons. A healthy competitive atmosphere is also gently encouraged.

UPCOMING K5 EVENTS

December 19th – Class Christmas party

December 22nd - Christmas Party

Dec. 23rd - Jan 9th – Winter break

January 26th – Anna, Olivia and Koki's birthday party