October was another busy month for the Junior Kindergarten. Here are some of the highlights:

• Read-In Week: Four different guests from the Faculty of Education came in to share their favourite books and love of reading with us. After their visits we spent time writing thank you letters in small groups - our guests loved reading these thoughtful notes!

• Fall Celebration: We showed off our classroom and shared our learning with family and friends. Activities included name tag making, apple taste-test, birthday graphing, mini-pumpkin hunt and music class.

• Research: our class is currently working with two undergraduate Early Childhood Education students, Tara and Jane, who join us on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons.

• Music: Music highlights are on the third page of the newsletter.
Project Work

Toys:
We are beginning to wrap up our project on toys - revisiting the learning experiences that we have shared and documenting our new understandings about toys. Some of the concepts that really stand out to us are:
- The idea that people keep their favourite toys for a long time - each person decides which toys are most important to them
- Toys are for playing with and this sometimes means that they will be broken - if and how they are fixed depends on what the toy is and who owns it
- People like different kinds of toys

Stories:
As we move forward in the school year we will begin to discuss stories. This is a very ‘big’ topic that we will spend time exploring it throughout the remainder of the school year. We will talk about different ways stories are told, why we tell stories, who writes stories and many more interesting topics. We will also begin to write stories individually and as groups - perhaps modeling some of the favourite books that we read. As an introduction to this project we are excited to have students share their favourite books from home, stay tuned for a new sharing schedule soon!

Don’t Forget the Blog!
Remember to check us out online at http://jrkindergarten.edublogs.org/ where you can get weekly updates on our classroom happenings, the titles of books we have been reading, view photos and even hear our favourite song about a cat named Pete!

TOY EXPERT

WE WERE THRILLED TO HAVE LARRY PROCHNER COME IN TO OUR CLASSROOM AND SHARE HIS KNOWLEDGE OF OLD TOYS WITH US, HE BROUGHT A SET OF BLOCKS FROM HIS COLLECTION WHICH WAS MORE THAN 130 YEARS OLD! WE WERE SO INTERESTED IN HEARING HIS ANSWERS TO OUR QUESTIONS ABOUT OLD TOYS.

GRAPHING

WE HAVE BEEN EXPLORING THE CONCEPTS OF ‘VOTING’ AND ‘GRAPHING’ AS WE TAKE POLLS ON TOPICS SUCH AS: HOW DID YOU GET TO SCHOOL? AND, WHEN WERE YOU BORN? WE USE THE COMPLETED GRAPHS TO PRACTICE COUNTING AND MAKING STATEMENTS ABOUT WHICH OPTIONS ARE MOST AND LEAST POPULAR.

CALENDAR

AT THE START OF NOVEMBER WE BEGAN TO LOOK AT A CLASSROOM CALENDAR. USING THE CALENDAR WE WILL MARK SPECIAL DATES AND BEGIN TO USE VOCABULARY SUCH AS: DAY, WEEK, MONTH, YEAR, YESTERDAY, TOMORROW, BEFORE AND AFTER. WE ARE BEGINNING TO NOTICE PATTERNS THAT REPEAT ON CERTAIN DAYS OF THE WEEK.
MUSIC WITH JANICE COMRIE

The afternoon Junior Kindergarten class has had a great time this fall in exploring musical concepts and classroom themes together:

- singing - using our "ringing, singing" voices
- moving - to music, to directions, in circle games and to the beat of a drum (fast/slow-tempo)
- exploring - with our voices, instruments and movement
- listening - to stories, directions, environmental sounds, and music (high/low, loud/soft)
- creating - using different non-pitched percussion instruments to represent animal and different tool sounds in our stories
- composing - with non-pitched percussion instruments and voices

Thank-you for taking the time to share in our Fall Celebration. The children were very proud to share some of their songs and activities with you. It has been amazing to observe their growth this fall.

Song based picture books are a regular part of our music class and we have had the opportunity to read, sing and explore with many of the wonderful musical books in our classroom library. If you have time to have a look at some of the books on our shelves, you will see why they provide very rich experiences for the children. While we are having the opportunity to develop some of our musical skills in tuneful singing, developing beat competency and exploring with our voices, the children are developing their phonological awareness. Cows in the Kitchen has been one of our favorites and more recently Knick Knack Paddy Whack. Cows in the Kitchen, along with Old MacDonald Had a Farm gave us the opportunity to play with our voices (moo, moo, quack, quack). This week we read a new version of If you’re Happy and You Know it which has an accompanying CD. We enjoyed listening to and practicing the many ways you can say hello in over 10 different languages at the end of the book.

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<th>SOME SONG-BASED PICTURE BOOKS WE HAVE EXPLORED</th>
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<td>Cows in the Kitchen</td>
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<td>Old MacDonald had a Farm</td>
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<td>Old MacDonald has a Woodshop</td>
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<td>Pete the Cat</td>
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<td>The Leaves on the Trees</td>
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<td>Driving my Tractor</td>
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REMINDERS

Dressing for the Weather
Before it gets too cold we will continue to try heading outside to play several times each week. Please help us with this task by ensuring that your child comes to school with gloves and a hat or hooded jacket each day - this helps ensure they are able to play comfortably!

Absences
Please ensure that your child’s absences from school are communicated to the JK staff via in-person conversation, phone call or e-mail. Our licensing regulations require that we contact the family of any child with an unexplained absence each day, as you can appreciate, with our busy classroom it is often challenging to find time to do this and we don’t want to intrude on your day with extra phone calls!

Snack
Some children are spending an extended period of time at the snack table each day. We would like to remind you to pack a snack that your child can comfortably eat in about 15-20 minutes. If you are packing a larger snack, please consider having a conversation with your child about the items that you would like them to eat and items that are optional.
Celebration of Giving

We are currently in the process of planning our next Celebration - the Celebration of Giving which will take place on December 15, 2011. In the month of December we will be working with Santa’s Anonymous to collect toy donations for children in need in and around our city. This will be a wonderful opportunity for the Junior Kindergarten students to discuss the spirit of the holiday season and to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate. For the Celebration we will, once again, welcome all Junior Kindergarten students and their special guests to our classroom to join us in a day of revisiting our learning and experiencing new activities. Snack will be potluck-style and we welcome you to bring something to share with the class but remind you that this is not an obligation!

Field Visit Date Correction

Oops! In looking through the Field Visit information package I have noticed a mistake! The 4Cats Art Studio Field Visit is listed as taking place on Wednesday, April 18, 2012, this is incorrect. **The 4Cats Art Studio Field Visit will take place on Monday, April 16, 2012.** Sorry for the error!

-Shannon