



Learning Through Play, Every Student, Every Day

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF 4-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN!

Greeting Families!

It is hard to believe that we have reached the halfway point of our 4K school year. I am sure that you have seen your children growing in many areas of their development. Soon you will be receiving your child's first of two written progress reports of the school year. The report lists the 4K curriculum learning standards and will identify your child's progress toward these standards as measured by GOLD. In addition to the progress report, you will receive a rubric that will assist you in understanding the ratings used.

Our teachers are just completing their mid-year assessment of your child using the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system. GOLD is an observational tool for children designed to assess what young children know and can do in relation to the widely held expectations for development at their age/grade nationally.

We know that children's performance of skills varies on different days and in different settings. These ratings provide us with just one piece of information about your child's progress, and we hope you will see that as well. As always, if you have any questions about your child's progress or your child's progress report, please reach out to your child's teacher; they are always happy to talk about your child's strengths and next steps!

2026-2027 4K ENROLLMENT

Do you know a child who will be 4 years old on or before September 1st?!

Appleton Community 4K enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year begins on Monday, February 9th, 2026!

Find more information on our 4K website:
4k.aasd.k12.wi.us/our-school/enrollment



WHAT'S IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE?

- Literacy Corner
- Books for your Student!
- Tucker's Corner
- Health Services Note
- February Activity Calendar
- AASD Birth-Five Events

Upcoming Events

- Learning Through Play Playgroups sponsored by Birth to Five Outreach: join on Thursdays each month from 9:00-10:00 AM OR 10:30-11:30 AM. Registration is required, see below for more information.
- Play with Purpose: join on Tuesdays each month from 9:00-10:00 AM or 10:30-11:30 AM. Registration is required, see below for more information.

For more information OR to register for any of these events, please contact:

(920) 832-6470



THE LITERACY CORNER

Learning to Read

As a parent, you have probably discovered that even a child younger than one year old can “respond” to stories that are read to them. They take plastic books into the bathtub, or spill juice on them during a meal. They cuddle up on your lap, pat the pictures, and make noises imitating your reading. Most of all, they want you to read the books over and over.

As your child learns to talk, they begin retelling the stories that are read to them. We call this behavior “talking like a book” (Clay, 1991). Your child is not reading the words; they are enjoying the pictures and pattern of the story by imitating your reading. As you choose books to read aloud, be sure that the story, language, and illustrations are highly engaging. The key is to make your child’s experiences with stories meaningful and memorable.

Here are some things that your child is learning even before they can read the words:

The pictures have an important message, but you read the print.

You start with the cover of the book and turn the pages.

You read the left page before the right page

You read from the top of the page, downward.

The story is over when you reach the last page.



This month’s book recommendations focus on highly engaging books:

Cock-a-Doodle Quack Quack by Ivor Baddiel

Dig Dig Digging by Margaret Mayo

Tacky the Penguin by Helen Lester

Little Blue Truck by Alice Schertle

Hurry, Hurry by Eve Bunting

Where is the Green Sheep by Mem Fox

Good Dog Carl by David Weisner

BOOKS FOR YOUR STUDENT!

Appleton Community 4K is excited to be able to provide four books to each 4K student throughout this school year! These books, for students to keep, are meant to support reading at home and help strengthen the connection between home and school.

Your child will receive their third book at your 4K site’s Parent-Teacher Conferences, so be sure to attend and get ready to read together! A final book will be received at the end of the school year.



TUCKER'S CORNER

How to Give Clear Directions to Children

Children are learning new skills that will help them to become more independent. Providing clear directions/expectations can help children to become more independent and helps to set limits on a child's behavior. A child may use challenging behavior to communicate a variety of messages. They may need help with a task, the task may be too difficult, they don't want to leave a preferred activity, and crying gets them what they want.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning below are some guidelines on ways to give directions, promote independence, and support young children best.

1. Make sure you have your child's attention when you give a direction. Begin by getting down on your child's eye level and gaining his attention. (i.e., touch your child gently or make eye contact)
2. Be clear about what you want your child to do and when she needs to do it.
3. Ask your child to repeat the direction back to you to make sure he understands.
4. Avoid asking questions when you want your child to do something. Asking a question gives your child the chance to say, "No!"
5. Give one direction at a time.
6. Model good listening skills during special playtime and give your child positive attention for following directions. Be prepared to provide your child with reminders about what to do. As a child first learns a skill, it's common to forget a step and need assistance.

When we give children clear directions, we are telling children exactly what is expected of them. Use directions that do not correct misbehaviors but instead promote expected behaviors. Try to stay away from phrases such as "Be a good Boy" or "Stop it". Use phrases such as "We use walking feet in the house" or "You need to sit on a chair at the table when you eat your snack." When we use this approach to giving directions, we are setting the child up for success by defining exactly what the expectation is. This positive approach also builds their confidence and overall self-worth.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2008). Giving Directions. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/directions/index.html>

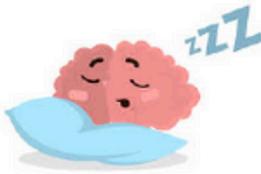
Child Mind (2008). How to Give Kids Effective Instructions retrieved from <https://childmind.org/article/how-to-give-kids-effective-instructions/>

https://cainclusion.org/resources/tp/materials/csefel/teaching_routines.pdf



FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE:

Healthy Sleep



Like eating well and being physically active, getting a good night's sleep is essential to the well-being of students and staff. A number of vital tasks carried out during sleep help maintain good health and enable people to function at their best. Not getting enough sleep can be dangerous and contribute to poor health.

Both the amount and quality of sleep affect how well people learn and remember as well as perform tasks like problem-solving and staying focused. Insufficient sleep causes people to be irritable and adversely affects behavior. Poor quality sleep on a regular basis increases the risk of having high blood pressure, obesity, heart disease, and other medical conditions.

Here is the CDC's recommended hours of sleep:

Preschool	3–5 years	10–13 hours per 24 hours (including naps)
School Age	6–12 years	9–12 hours per 24 hours
Teen	13–18 years	8–10 hours per 24 hours
Adult	18–60 years	7 or more hours per night
	61–64 years	7–9 hours
	65 years and older	7–8 hours

Here are some of their suggestions to improve sleep health:

- Be consistent. Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning, including on the weekends
- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, relaxing, and at a comfortable temperature
- Remove electronic devices, such as TVs, computers, and smartphones, from the bedroom
- Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime
- Get some exercise. Being physically active during the day can help you fall asleep more easily at night.

February Play Ideas Calendar Preschool



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <p>Make an animal noise. See if your child can guess which animal it is.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>National Groundhog Day! Make this cute groundhog craft* or play peek-a-boo like the groundhog.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Play With Purpose at CELC from 9-10 & 10:30-11:30 Making Friends (Registration required)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>National Homemade Soup Day! Make soup for dinner or make pretend soup* with your child.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Learning Through Play at CELC from 9-10 & 10:30-11:30 Heart-to-Heart (Registration required)</p>	<p>6</p> <p>National Wear Red Day! Wear all the red you can find or find red items in your house.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Waiting can be hard. Try counting while your child jumps in place.</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Try belly breathing with Elmo! Teaching Belly Br... or take a small stuffy, put it on your belly and take deep breaths.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>National Pizza Day! Enjoy pizza for dinner or talk about different foods people could put on pizza.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Play With Purpose at CELC from 9-10 & 10:30-11:30 Let's Get Moving (Registration required)</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Draw 2 circles on a piece of paper. Put the paper in a shallow dish and add some rice. Let your child move the rice into the circles to make a snowman*.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Learning Through Play at CELC from 9-10 & 10:30-11:30 Tails of Friendship (Registration required) Block Party* 6-7 PM</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Visit the Appleton Public Library* at 10:00 a.m. for little learners playtime.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Draw a heart on paper*. Let your child color it and have them give it to someone they love. </p>
<p>15</p> <p>Need a quick cleanup? Play one song and race to clean up the mess before the song ends.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Overwhelmed? Find 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste*.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Play With Purpose at CELC from 9-10 & 10:30-11:30 Follow the Leader (Registration required)</p>	<p>18</p> <p>*By starting your child's brushing routine when their first tooth erupts, you create healthy habits and reduce tooth decay.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Learning Through Play at CELC from 9-10 & 10:30-11:30 All About Teeth (Registration required)</p>	<p>20</p> <p>National Comfy Day! Keep those pajamas on*. Read books or watch a movie while snuggling.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Visit the Appleton Public Library* at 10:00 a.m. for storytime symphony.</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Have an indoor picnic*. Lay a blanket on the ground and enjoy a nice lunch on the floor.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>National Banana Bread Day! Don't throw away the brown bananas, make bread* instead!</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Draw a tooth on a piece of paper*. Let your child use toothpaste and their finger to 'brush' the tooth.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Tape cut out hearts on the ground*. Let your child hop on them or crawl over them. </p>	<p>26</p> <p>National Tell a Fairy Tale Day! Tell your favorite fairy tale to your child.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>National Polar Bear Day! Make a polar bear craft by tracing your child's hand*.</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Take a walk outside. See how many red things you can spot </p>

AASD
Birth-Five
OUTREACH

**BIRTH-FIVE OUTREACH &
APPLETON COMMUNITY 4K PRESENTS:**

Appleton
COMMUNITY 4K

BLOCK PARTY!

FREE!



**FEB. 12TH
6-7 PM**
Open to families
with children
ages birth-5 years.
Siblings are welcome.

ACTIVITIES:
Explore the power of block
play through crafts, games,
stories and more.
Designed for children five and
under and their caregivers.



**Community Early Learning Center
313 S. State Street, Appleton**

Registration is required by Feb. 9th

PLEASE CONTACT DANIELLE TZAKAIS
AT (920) 832-6470 #1 OR
TZAKAISDANIELL@AASD.K12.WI.US

The following is needed for registration:
Parent/caregiver name, Child's name/birthdate,
phone number, address & email address



AASD Birth-Five Outreach & Parent Connection invites you to

Positive Solutions for Families



Would you like help with:

- Understanding and addressing your child's challenging behaviors
- Helping your child develop social and emotional skills

Families will learn to:

- Develop children's social and emotional skills
- Understand why challenging behaviors occur
- Use positive approaches to teach appropriate behavior

*For parents/caretakers of children 5 and younger
Cost: FREE, with free onsite childcare available
Space is limited so register soon!*

*In-Person Classes at the
Community Early Learning Center
313 S. State St., Appleton
Tuesdays | 6:00-8:00 pm
February 24, March 3, 10, 17
Plan to attend all 4 dates*



Registration is required by Feb. 17, 2026.

Please contact: Danielle Tzakais at
(920) 832-6470 #1 or
tzakaisdaniell@aasd.k12.wi.us

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