



Mokena Elementary School Stars



February 2012 Newsletter

Mr. Chris Clavenna
Principal

Mrs. Judy Splayt
Assistant Principal

School Office:
708/342-4850
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708/478-4212
On the Web:
<http://mokena159.org>

Parent-Teacher Conferences Friday, February 17th

Parent-Teacher conferences will be scheduled on Friday, February 17th, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. These conferences are a means of reporting the child's progress in school and also to maintain open lines of communication between the school and home.



Conference appointment invitations will be sent home on Friday, February 3rd to parents of students in grades K-3 whom teachers would particularly like to see. Parents who have not been contacted by a teacher by February 16th, but who wish to schedule a conference, should call the MES office (708) 342-4850 to arrange an appointment. Conferences are by appointment only.

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Kindergarten Registration

No definite date has been set yet for Kindergarten Registration.

More information will be posted on the district website www.Mokena159.org as it becomes available.

Children must be five years old on or before September 1, 2012 and residents of Mokena Public School District 159, to be eligible for Kindergarten during the 2012/2013 school year. Parents must provide an original state birth certificate at the time of registration. A birth certificate is the only document that will be accepted as proof of a child's age. Birth certificates are available from the county clerk in the county where the child was born.

Any questions regarding Kindergarten Registration should be directed to Mrs. Chris Clavenna, Principal of Mokena Elementary School.

2011-2012 MES Yearbook

The Mokena Elementary School
Yearbook will be on sale
February 13th-24th

The yearbook is a photographic keepsake for all students attending MES. Individual student and staff photographs, candid shots, and school group pictures will be included in the yearbook. **The cost of this year's yearbook is \$15.00.**

Order forms will be coming home with students just prior to the sale dates.

CogAT Testing February 13th, 15th, 16th

The CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) will be administered to all Kindergarten and 1st grade students on February 13th, 15th, 16th. The test measures both general and specific cognitive abilities and is divided into three separate test batteries: Verbal, Quantitative, and Non-Verbal. Please be sure that your child gets plenty of sleep the night before, and eats a good breakfast the morning of the tests.

11:40 Early Dismissal Day—Wednesday, February 8th

PM Kindergarten ATTENDS

NO SCHOOL for AM Kindergarten



STARS Qualities



Since the beginning of the school year we have been concentrating on showing different qualities that we believe will make our students successful.

Each month the students have concentrated on a quality. So far we have discussed RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, HONESTY, and FAIRNESS. The month of February we will talk about CARING. The color that represents caring will be red.

Nurse Molly's Corner



ATTENTION: All Current Kindergarten and
2nd Grade students

Dental exam forms are due to the nurse's office as soon as possible. For your convenience you can either:

1. Drop them off at the MES office
2. Fax them to 708/479-3120
3. Mail them marked to the attention of Nurse Molly.

Thank you so much for your help!
Nurse Molly

Kindergarten Students:

Vision Exam Forms are now Past Due!

Please submit if not returned already!





Valentine's Day Party Times



All Parties will be on Tuesday, February 14th
 AM Kindergarten – 10:30 am
 PM Kindergarten & 1st, 2nd, 3rd grades – 1:45 pm
 Room Party Parents: please do not arrive any earlier than 1:30 pm
 Thank you!



Alexandra Gillund is Runner-Up!

Alexandra Gillund entered the Mokena Fire Department coloring contest and ended up being a runner up. She received a certificate and a savings bond!

Congratulations Alexandra,
 you made MES proud!!!

M.E.S. Scholastic Book Fair



Mokena Elementary School will host the Scholastic Book Fair from **March 26-March 30** in the Central Learning Center.

This is a wonderful opportunity to purchase books for your home library. Teachers will sign-up for a time for their class to visit the Book Fair during the school day.

Parents are invited to visit the book fair with their child's classroom or on the special family/community night scheduled for **Tuesday, March 27th, from 6:30–8:30 p.m.**

Child Passenger Safety

For more information check out the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Website: www.nhtsa.gov



Just a quick note:

Please do not rely on emails to your child's teacher regarding changes in transportation. If the teacher is absent, their substitute does not have access to email. Please call the main office with any changes.

PTA Fun Fair

Saturday, March 3rd,
the Mokena PTA will
hold its annual
Family Fun Fair!



The hours are 11:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.
There will be games, clowns,
caricatures, prizes, food, raffles,
and much more for
the entire family to enjoy!

NO CELL PHONES IN A SCHOOL ZONE LAW

Traffic Laws

As of January 1, 2010 new traffic laws
came into effect in Illinois.

- * Drivers are prohibited from using an electronic communication device to compose, send, or read an electronic message while operating a motor vehicle on a roadway. Electronic message is defined as electronic mail, a text message, an instant message, or a command or request to access an Internet site.
- * Drivers are prohibited from using a wireless telephone while operating a vehicle in a school zone or on a highway in a construction or maintenance speed zone.

More details on these new laws can be found at:

<http://www.dot.il.gov/>



Heart Awareness Month/Jump Rope for Heart

MES students will once again participate in "Jump Rope for Heart" heart awareness/fund raising program for the American Heart Association.

The jump roping portion of the program will occur during your child's physical education classes. This event will take place the week of March 19th—23rd. Collection/donation envelopes along with additional information will be distributed the week of February 27th. During the month of February students will be given Jump Rope for Heart presentations and work on posters/pages to display in the MES hallways.

In years past, the students of MES have raised well over \$160,000 for charitable organizations and we hope in these economically challenging times to be able to raise enough money to help make a difference.

MOKENA MUSIC BOOSTERS Presents **Dippin' Dots**



From the Mokena Music Boosters:

A big THANK YOU to Mrs. Clavenna, the MES staff and all the families for supporting the Dippin' Dots fundraiser again this year at Mokena Elementary School. This is our second biggest fundraiser for the Music Boosters, the first is Market Day. With the profits from these two programs we are able to purchase sheet music, repair instruments and purchase new equipment for School District #159 music program for the students in band and chorus in grades 5th through 8th.

Thank you also to the many parent volunteers who help count money and distribute them during the school day. We truly appreciate all of their support.

Our next Dippin' Dots sale for MES will be Friday, March 23rd. If you would like to help with this fundraiser please contact Lindsey Samanic or with our music booster program call Karen Bussean at 708-479-0192.

Lindsey Samanic 708-269-1603 - Dippin Dots Chairperson

GCN – Global Compliance Network

Mokena School District 159 subscribes to the Global Compliance Network (GCN) to ensure that our staff members have engaged in training/tutorials related to several state and federal mandates.

GCN also allows parents to take advantage of some of these tutorials free of charge. A link to the tutorials appears on the bottom of the district website. At this time, you may access Internet-based trainings on GCN with regard to the following:

Bullying

Written by Mhora Newsom-Stewart, Ph.D., the Director of Collaborative Evaluation and Strategic Change in Health and Education at the EDUCATION CONNECTION, this tutorial advocates the establishment of good school climate in reducing aggressive behaviors. Objectives for the tutorial include defining bullying, describing the impact bullying has on the aggressor, the target and the by-stander, understanding the increasing frequency of school shootings, identifying the characteristics shared by all school shooters, and how to develop a positive school climate.

Cyber Bullying

Thousands of children are assaulted physically, verbally, or emotionally each day of school throughout the United States. "The National Education Association estimates that 160,000 students miss school every day because of fear of attack or intimidation by a bully". However, with the advancements of today's technology and the availability of this technology to our young children, a new and more devastating form of bullying called cyber bullying is emerging as an advanced method of inflicting social cruelty to its victims in a way that surpasses conventional bullying methods. Written by Nathan Kleefisch from the Tri-Creek School Corporation, in this tutorial, you will learn about the general characteristics of cyber bullying; about the definition of cyber bullying; to identify the roles of the bully, victim and the bystanders relative to cyber bullying; and to identify ways in which schools and adults can reduce school violence and cyber bullying.

February 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Early Dismissal At 11:40 am PM K Attends NO school for AM Kindergarten	9 <i>Board of Ed. Meeting 7:00</i> At MES	10 <i>Red & White Day</i>	11
12	13 CogAT Testing in Kindergarten and First Grade	14 <i>Valentine's Day Parties at 1:45 pm</i> 	15 CogAT Testing in Kindergarten and First Grade	16	17 No School <i>Parent/Teacher Conferences 8:00 am-3:00 pm</i>	18
19	20 No School <i>President's Day</i> 	21	22 Market Day Pick up MJH 4:30-6:00pm	23	24 <i>Green & Gold Day</i>	25
26	27 <i>PTA Meeting 4:00 MES</i>	28	29			

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2012

Mokena Elementary School
Christine Clavenna, Principal

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ A Sick Day for Amos McGee



Zookeeper Amos McGee always takes good care of his animals. So when he has a cold, the animals go to his house and take care of him. They play games, read to him, and make sure he is warm and comfortable. A tale of friendship by Philip Stead. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ Airplanes: Soaring! Diving! Turning!

Readers will discover many different kinds of airplanes in this fact-filled book by Patricia Hubbell. Your child will learn the purpose of each plane, from familiar passenger jets to hydroplanes and crop dusters.



Fans of grown-up Amelia Bedelia will love this story about the goofy housekeeper as a child. Amelia is confused by figures of speech, so on Valentine's Day, she thinks a "cutie pie" is something you eat, and she can't figure out how to wear her heart on her sleeve. The first book in Herman Parish's series about young Amelia.

■ Ten Grouchy Groundhogs

After being stuck in the ground all winter, the groundhogs are not in a good mood. In this cute story by Kathryn Heling and Deborah Hembrook, your youngster can count backward from 10 as each animal pops out of the crowded den on Groundhog Day.



Let's sing!

Your child might know "The Farmer in the Dell" and "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" by heart—but does she know what words like "dell" and "merrily" mean? She can use familiar songs to learn new words, play with rhymes, and practice reading and writing. Here's how.



Figure out meanings

When you sing with your youngster, talk about what the lyrics mean. If she doesn't know a word, see if she can figure it out from the context of the line. ("Mary had a little lamb. Its fleece was white as snow." What could *fleece* be?) Or help her look it up in the dictionary.

Write lyrics

Your child can learn about rhymes by making up lyrics to favorite tunes. First, have her pick a song and name the rhyming words. For example, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" includes "star" and

"are," and "high" and "sky." Then, help her write her own rhyming lines. ("Sparkle, sparkle, little moon, where do you hide when it's noon?") Finally, sing the song with her.

Read song books

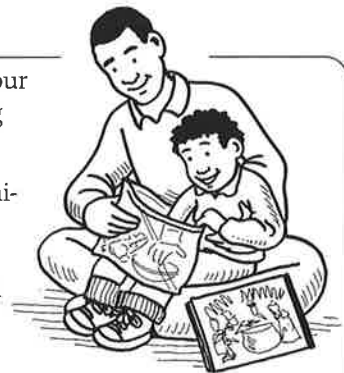
Ask a librarian for picture-book versions of songs, such as "My Favorite Things" or "Down by the Bay." When you read them with your child, have her point to things in the illustrations and find the matching lyrics ("raindrops on roses," "llamas eating their pajamas"). *Idea:* Encourage your youngster to write out the words and illustrate a song. ♥

Story-in-a-bag

These activity bags make reading extra fun. Let your youngster choose a book and place it in a zipper bag along with the following:

● **Props.** Add household items and toys that are similar to objects and characters in the book. Your child can use them to act out the story as he reads. For example, props for *Stone Soup* (Marcia Brown) could include rocks, a small bowl, and plastic vegetables.

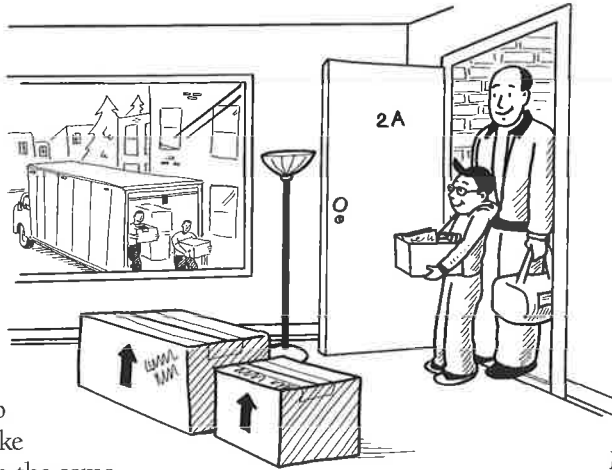
● **Craft supplies.** Include materials (paper, crayons, scissors, glue) so your youngster can do a project related to the book. He might design a bookmark showing what happens in the story or create a mask that looks like a character. ♥



Connecting with books

"We live in a tall apartment building, just like the family in this book!" It's easier for your child to understand a story if he can relate to it. Here are tips for helping him connect with books:

- When you're reading a book that reminds you of something, point it out to your youngster. *Example:* "I ride a train like that to work." Then, encourage him to do the same. You might ask, "Who does that character look like?" or, "Have you ever been to a place like that?"



- Use your child's experiences to increase his understanding of a story. For instance, ask him to use what he knows about birthdays to predict what will happen during a party in the book ("The kids are probably going to play games and eat cake").

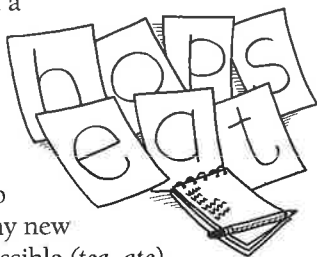
- Help your youngster find books that are related to an upcoming event in his life. If you're moving, try *Boomer's Big Day* (Constance McGeorge).

Talk about how the character feels (confused, nervous) and what your child might experience (packing belongings, meeting new neighbors). ♥

Fun with Words Rearrange a word

What do "Abby" and "baby" have in common? They are *anagrams*—words that have the exact same letters in a different order. Your child can learn to unscramble words with this anagram activity.

Have your youngster start by writing each letter of the alphabet on a separate sheet of paper. Then, think of a three-letter word (*eat*), and put the letters for the word on a table or on the floor. Ask your child to rearrange the letters to spell as many new words as possible (*tea, ate*).



Next, give her a four-letter word and see if she can spell new words using those letters (*care, race; hops, shop*). Then, switch roles and let her think of anagrams for you.

Idea: Have your child keep a running list of all the words the two of you spell—she'll have a collection of anagrams. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children's reading, writing, and language skills.

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Q&A Choosing read-alouds

Q I know it's important to read aloud to my daughter, but I'm not sure how to pick the right books. What do you suggest?

A It's a good idea to read a wide variety of books, from fairy tales to nonfiction, so that your daughter will be exposed to many genres.

Books with repeating lines are especially fun to read aloud. Youngsters love hearing, "I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house down!" from *The Three Little Pigs*. Detailed illustrations, like those in books by Jan Brett, hold children's attention because there's so much to look at on each page. And be sure to read books that you enjoyed when you were little. Knowing that you liked a book when you were her age will get your child excited about reading it.

Finally, when you're considering a book, read the first few pages to decide whether you think it will capture your youngster's attention. If the story appeals to her right away, she'll want to keep listening. ♥



Parent to Parent Write an instruction manual

My son Rodney loves Play-Doh, and he always comes up with such creative ideas. One day, I suggested that he write directions for his inventions so his friends or siblings could make them, too.

Rodney decided to write an instruction manual for putting together a Play-Doh cheeseburger. He took a photo of each step—making the bun, forming the patty, slicing the cheese, and creating the toppings. He



glued each photo on a sheet of paper, and I helped him write directions underneath. For example, to go with his picture of a Play-Doh tomato slice, we wrote, "Roll red dough into a ball. Flatten it."

Then, Rodney and I stapled together the pages of his manual. When his friend Jesse came over after school, Rodney showed him the booklet, and Jesse was able to follow the instructions easily.

Next, Rodney wants to write directions for creating a real ice cream sundae! ♥

Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

Mokena Elementary School
Christine Clavenna, Principal

FEBRUARY 2012

Refrigerator Poster

Just hang your *Recipes* poster on the refrigerator and sneak in an activity when you have a few minutes. These fun activities will help develop school success and positive behavior. Check off each box as you complete the "recipe."

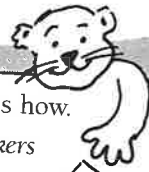
WRITING Activity Box

It's fun to write...and writing can lead to even more fun! Here's how.

Ingredients: pencil, index cards, small box or large envelope, markers or crayons

Have your youngster write each letter of the alphabet on an index card. Then, help him brainstorm an activity for each letter. *Examples:* A = make paper airplanes; B = read a book; C = call a friend. If he gets stuck, suggest that he look through the dictionary for words. He might end up with interesting activities for tough letters like Q (play a game of 20 Questions) and X (build a xylophone).

Let him decorate the outside of a small box or large envelope to hold his cards. The next time he says, "There's nothing to do," he can choose a card and do the activity.



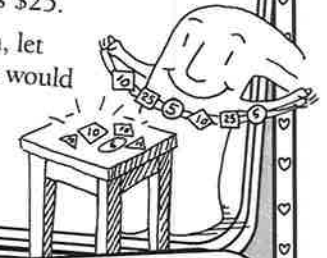
MATH Math Jewels

This colorful activity is a real "gem."

Ingredients: construction paper, scissors, tape

Pretend that you and your child own a jewelry store. You have just received a shipment of precious stones shaped like circles, squares, and triangles. Help your youngster cut several copies of each shape (about the size of a nickel) out of different-colored construction paper. Have her write a value on each one. *Examples:* circles are worth \$5; triangles \$15; squares \$25.

Ask her to design a bracelet by taping shapes together. Then, let her practice adding money by figuring out what the bracelet would cost. *Idea:* Challenge her to make a necklace that's worth a certain amount (\$95, \$150). Can she make a second necklace worth the same amount but using different links?



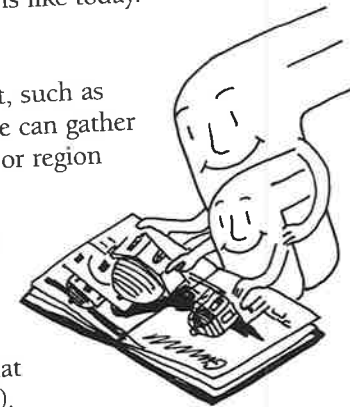
HISTORY Connecting Past and Present

When your child studies a country or region in history, it might be more interesting to him if he knows what that place is like today.

Ingredients: encyclopedia or atlas, books

Ask him to choose a place he is learning about, such as ancient Greece. Then, head to the library so he can gather books or visit websites that show the country or region today.

Encourage your youngster to tell you what he discovers about food, language, geography, customs, and music. Together, choose an activity to do—you might cook a dish, read a folk tale, or listen to popular music from that region (see worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com).



READING

Ask each family member to choose a day to bring something interesting to read at the breakfast table. Or pick a theme for each day and have everyone share a specific kind of reading material. *Examples:* Monday—jokes, Tuesday—news articles, Wednesday—poems.



SCIENCE

February 11 is Thomas Edison's birthday. He invented many things that we use today, including light-bulbs and movie cameras. Encourage your youngster to dream up inventions of her own, such as a "self-cleaning" room or a new kind of ponytail holder. She can draw a picture of her creation.



Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

FEBRUARY 2012

Character Corner

READING

Forecast: Better Comprehension

Weather forecasts are full of words and symbols. Your youngster can boost her reading comprehension by mixing and matching them.

Ingredients: newspapers or Internet, scissors

Cut out the weekly weather report from the newspaper (or print it from www.weather.com). Separately, cut out the symbols that go with each day's forecast.

Then, mix them up and see if your child can match the correct symbol to the report that goes with it. She'll need to read each word carefully, since forecasts can sound similar. For example, a forecast of "partly cloudy" would go with a symbol that shows both clouds and sun. "Rain mixed with snow" should be paired with a picture of raindrops and snowflakes.



SPELLING

This backward spelling bee can help your youngster recognize letter sounds. Instead of spelling the words normally, players have to call out the letters in reverse order. For example, "spell" becomes "L-L-E-P-S." Your child can sound out the word backward as he spells.

L-L-E-P-S



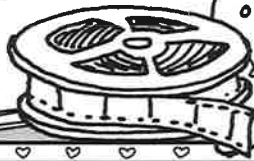
MATH

Have your youngster see how many faces she can draw with these combinations of traits: blue or brown eyes, a smile or a frown, and black or red hair. Then, ask her to come up with an equation that explains why her number of combinations is correct ($2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$).



TIME

The next time your child watches a movie, see if she can figure out its exact running time. She can write down what time it starts, when each commercial break begins and ends, and what time the movie is over. She'll need to compute the time from beginning to end and then add up the commercial breaks and subtract them from the total time.



Congratulations!

We finished _____ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)

APPRECIATION

What is your youngster grateful for? Suggest that he choose something (home, ice cream, pet) and write a pretend thank-you note to it. ("Dear house, Thank you for being so warm and cozy. I especially like my favorite chair where I read books.")



SPORTSMANSHIP



Have your child write rules of good sportsmanship and post them near your family's game collection. *Examples:* "Congratulate the winner," "Finish even if you're losing," "Be patient during other players' turns." Then, play a favorite game together, and practice the rules she listed.

HUMOR

Help your youngster find fun in everyday situations—even when things are difficult. *Example:* Your child is frustrated because the computer froze. Say something lighthearted like, "Now you have time to jump rope while you wait for it to reboot."



STORYTELLING

Here's a fun way for your family to tell a story. One person states a silly problem ("There was an elephant in my chair"). The next person adds a line that starts with "Fortunately" ("... he had peanuts for everyone"). The third person begins with "Unfortunately" ("... the peanuts were rotten"). Keep going until you run out of ideas.

