

# Mokena Elementary School



October 2011 Newsletter

Mrs. Chris Clavenna  
Principal

Mrs. Judy Splayt  
Assistant Principal

**School Office:**

**708-342-4850**

**Absentee Line:**

**708-478-4212**

**On the Web:**

<http://mokena159.org>

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## Halloween Parties

Monday, October 31st



Halloween parties have been scheduled for Monday, October 31st from 1:45 pm to 2:45 pm. In order to ensure a safe and fun day for everyone, we ask that you consider the following guidelines when planning your child's costume:

- Masks and props are not allowed in school; please refrain from designing costumes utilizing these items.
- No aerosol cans of hair spray or spray paint will be allowed in school.
- Students may wear makeup, provided they are able to put it on themselves or it has been put on at home.
- Children may wear costumes to school as long as the costumes do not interfere with regular school activities.

Please remember that room parents will not be allowed to bring children other than MES students to the room parties. It is very difficult for parents to attend to the needs of our students as well as supervise other young children in their care. If you are unable to be a room parent because of this policy, please contact your child's teacher to see if you can help in another way. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to Mrs. Clavenna or Mrs. Splayt at 342-4850.

## Inclement Weather



We would like for you to know that all of our staff at MES are very well trained in the event of an emergency. Please be assured that we constantly monitor the weather during such emergencies via weather radio, radar, news reports and bulletins. In the event of an emergency situation at the school (whether it be a take cover, a building lock down, or engaging in an escape plan due to fire or some other emergency) the staff have specific directions as to how to protect the children in their classrooms. Many times, especially during stormy weather, the school might be the safest place for the students. At these times, we need the cooperation of parents to allow us to carry through with our emergency procedures; during these times, we will not release students from the building until we deem it is safe to do so.



## School Closing Information



While it may seem early to even think about winter weather, it will be here before we know it! Should we have an emergency school closing, a Connect Ed phone message will be sent. Additional information is available through the following:

District159 website at: [www.mokena159.org](http://www.mokena159.org)  
Cancellations.com

Announcements will also be made between 6:30 and 8:00 a.m. on WJOL (AM-1340), WBBM (AM-780), and Channel 9 television.

### *A Favor To Ask...*

Although we understand that there are times when a child must be picked up early from school, we ask that this be kept to a **minimum**. Continuity of instruction is important in the classroom, and scheduling appointments outside of the regular school day will help to alleviate some of the distractions associated with students leaving early from school.

Thank you!



### Please mark your Calendar

Mokena School District students will be ***off the entire week*** of Thanksgiving:

Monday, November 21	Parent/Teacher Conferences
Tuesday, November 22	No School Teacher Institute Day
Weds., November 23-25	Thanksgiving Break

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held

Monday, November 21st  
from  
12:00 noon—8:00 pm

### Evening Building Availability

Please note that unless there are planned evening activities, the doors to Mokena Elementary School will be locked at 5:00 p.m. If students need to return to MES to retrieve books or assignments after school hours, please be sure to arrive at the school prior to 5:00 p.m.



Thanks for your cooperation!

### MES Website



Please be sure to check out our school's Internet homepage. You can reach the MES site via the District web address at [www.mokena159.org](http://www.mokena159.org) and clicking on the Mokena Elementary School link.

You can pull up the monthly lunch menu, check the calendar, look for email addresses and read our monthly newsletter! Enjoy!

## Transportation

Just a few reminders regarding student transportation to and from school:

- Please notify the MES office and/or your child's teacher if there are any changes to your child's transportation; if applicable, please notify any daycare provider of these changes as well.
- If you are picking up your child early from school, please do so by 2:50 p.m.
- To ensure safety, any student riding a bicycle to school must walk their bicycle while on school property. Thanks for your cooperation!

## Picking Up/Dropping Off Students

- Parents/guardians who are picking up students who walk to school must wait on the east side of the bus lane.
- Again, as a reminder, the walker students are dismissed at 3:07p.m. and bus riders are dismissed at approximately 3:20 p.m. Please remind students to be careful in the parking lot and to watch their exit from your vehicle. **Parents must not park their cars in undesignated parking spots.**
- Also, please do not double park nor block any of the emergency lanes while in the MES parking lot.

We appreciate your assistance in helping with the safety of all the students at MES.



## Soup Labels

Parents, we are still collecting Campbell's soup labels. This is a great way to stay involved in your child's school without us taking up too much of your time. Please take a few seconds to cut out the UPC label on all Campbell's products or anything that says "Labels for Education". We only need the UPC. Thank you so much for your involvement and if you have any questions, please call Donna McKenna at 630-643-5253 or [www.simply.green@hotmail.com](mailto:www.simply.green@hotmail.com).

## Virtual Backpack



Mokena School District 159 will continue our efforts of "going green" by communicating messages from our community groups and municipal agencies via Virtual Backpack.

Virtual Backpack can be found on the district website: [www.mokena159.org](http://www.mokena159.org). Please check it regularly for the most up-to-date happenings in our community.

Organizations wishing to have their fliers appear in the Virtual Backpack should email a PDF version to the District Superintendent, Mr. Steve Stein at [steins@mokena159.org](mailto:steins@mokena159.org). If approved, all fliers are limited to a one month posting.

## A Few Reminders from Nurse Molly/Mrs. Bohrer...



### PREVENTION: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"

- PLEASE keep your child home when they are sick. This also means that your child should be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. Call your MD with all of your concerns.
- If your child has Asthma, we NEED a "rescue inhaler" for him/her here at school. You can download those forms from the website or stop in the health office to pick them up. It will require both an MD's signature and your signature.
- Talk with your doctor to see if the flu vaccine is right for you and your family.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables before serving!
- Hand washing is your family's BEST defense against illness!
- Bring healthy snacks to school—it's a good life time habit to start now!
- Due to colder weather approaching, it would be a good idea to buy your child a chapstick to keep in his/her desk for chapped lips.
- Cough drops are allowed with a note from home.
- Please wear close-toed shoes.

Please feel free to contact me directly with any health related concerns!

## Mokena Educational Foundation

Included in this newsletter is the first MEF fundraiser which will be at Berkot's in Mokena. Shop at Berkot's on the dates of October 17th & 18th or October 24th & 25th, present a coupon at checkout and a percentage of your total will be refunded to the Mokena Education Foundation. It's a quick and easy way to give back to our schools! Please feel free to share these forms with your friends—extra copies are available in the MES office.

The Mokena Educational Foundation is looking for parents interested in becoming active members of the Foundation and assisting in the development of fundraising opportunities to benefit all of our students in the District.

Interested persons should contact Cathy Gainer at 479-0537.

## Fire Prevention Assemblies



Representatives from the Mokena Fire Department will be here to meet with every class during the month of October. First and second grade students will go through a simulated escape in an inflatable "safe house." Students in Kindergarten and 3rd Grade will have classroom presentations on fire safety.

## Standardized Testing Dates for the 2011-2012 School Year

\*\*\*\*\*

Terra Nova (Grd 3) - Jan. 23 - Jan. 27

Cognitive Abilities Test (Grd K - 1) Feb. 13, 15, 16

ISAT (Grd. 3) - March 5 - 16

Terra Nova (Grd. 1) - March 6 - 9



## STRANGER DANGER

How does your child react when approached by someone unfamiliar? Help your child to learn what to do and what not to do when confronted by a stranger. Here are some tips:

**Avoid scare tactics:** It can be upsetting for children to feel like they live in a dangerous world filled with strangers who want to do them harm. It's far more helpful for them to experience the world as basically a safe place. Children just need to know and follow a few simple rules.

**Talk about what's okay:** Tell your child, "When you're with Mom or Dad and someone you don't know says hello to you, it's nice to say hello back to them."

**Talk about what's not okay:** You can tell your child that most people are nice and friendly and want to help each other. But there are a few bad people who want to harm others. One way you know them is if they ask you to go with them without telling your parents, your teacher, or your babysitter.

**Discuss strategies:** "What can you do when a stranger tries to get you to come with him or her? What can you say? Can you ask for help?" Together, make a list of the ideas you come up with, like testing the stranger with a secret password, running away and yelling "Help!", asking a nearby grownup to help you, looking for a police officer, or going to the nearest store, etc. Then choose the ones your child is most comfortable with.

**Role play:** Play the part of a stranger who may seem friendly and innocent but really isn't: "Hi, want to come to my house? I have a big bag of candy for you" or "Your mother is in the hospital, and she told me to come and get you and bring you to her." By rehearsing the scenario in advance, you will have given your child the means and the confidence to protect himself if he's ever confronted with the real thing.

Adapted from Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish.

Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish are best-selling authors of *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk*, *Siblings Without Rivalry*, and



Wednesday, October 12th  
11:40 Early Dismissal  
PM Kindergarten Attends

# October 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31 Halloween Parties, 1:45-2:45 pm 					1
2	3 PTA Meeting 4:00 pm MES	4	5	6	7 "Pink" & Denim Day	8
9	10 No School Columbus Day 	11	12 Early Dismissal at 11:40 am PM K Attends	13 Board of Ed. Meeting at MIS, 7:00 pm	14	15
16	17	18	19 Market Day Pickup, MJHS, 4:30-5:30 pm	20	21 Bears/Football Day End of 1st Quarter Dippin Dots	22
23	24 PTA Meeting 4:00 pm MES	25	26	27	28 Report Card Day	29



20005 S. Wolf Road Mokena, IL 60448

Store # 309 Checker #
Mokena Educational Foundation Dist 159
Mokena, IL

Berkot's Community Involvement Days are good for:
Oct 17th & 18th 2011 (Mon/Tues)

Total amount of purchase \$
(Excluding tobacco, cigarettes liquor or tax)

Date of Shopping

Customer Signature



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# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

October 2011

Mokena Elementary School  
Chris Clavenna, Principal

## Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish*

In Neil Gaiman's hilarious story, a little boy trades his father for his friend's goldfish. His mom insists that he trade back, but it's too late: the neighborhood children have been swapping Dad back and forth for things they want. Find out how his family gets him home.



### ■ *Those Shoes*

Jeremy wants striped high-top sneakers like his classmates have. But the popular shoes are expensive, and he needs boots instead. His trip to a thrift shop leads to an important lesson. A heartwarming tale by Mari-beth Boelts.



### ■ *Night Light: A Book About the Moon*

How are Earth and the moon like friends? In clever language, Dana Meachen Rau's nonfiction book explains how Earth and the moon are held together by gravity. The book also discusses the moon's phases, orbit, and effect on Earth's tides. (Also available in Spanish.)

### ■ *Crow Call*

Lizzie doesn't know her father very well. That's because he has been away at war for a long time. Lois Lowry's story describes a special day in 1945 when father and daughter reconnect and discover they have a lot to learn from each other.



## Good question!

What kinds of questions pop into your child's head while she reads?

By paying close attention to her own questions—and reading carefully for the answers—she can understand a story better. Here are ways your youngster can use questioning to improve her comprehension.

### Before

Suggest that your child get ready to read by asking questions before starting a book. For example, if she's going to read about koalas, she might think, "What do they eat?" or "Where do they live?" These specific questions will encourage her to read closely for details as she searches for the answers.

### During

Stopping to ask questions is a good way for your youngster to keep tabs on her own understanding. If she's reading a book like *Henry and Mudge and the Forever Sea* (Cynthia Rylant), she might think, "Wait a minute. Mudge is afraid of water, so why is he in the ocean?" Then, she could look back in the book



to see if she missed something, or she can continue reading to see if the next few pages clear things up. ("Oh! He wanted to catch a lobster.")

### After

When your child finishes a book, let her think more deeply about it by asking herself "big picture" questions. She might ask, "What was the problem in the story, and how did it get solved?" "Would you like the main character as a friend? Why or why not?" "Would you like to live in the story's setting?" *Tip:* Help her make a list of questions to keep on hand. She can ask—and answer—them after each book she reads.♥

## Autumn handwriting

Handwriting practice is colorful and fun with these fall-themed projects:

- Let your youngster collect leaves from the ground and tear them into confetti-sized pieces. Then, have him dip a cotton swab in glue and use it to write a message on paper. ("Fall is here!") Finally, he can sprinkle his "leaf confetti" onto his sticky message and gently shake the paper to remove the excess.
- Help your child cut 26 apple shapes from red, yellow, and green construction paper. He can write an uppercase and a lowercase letter on each one (Aa, Bb, Cc). Let him use the apples to decorate a household bulletin board. Or have him glue them to poster board, and hang his "apple alphabet" on the wall.♥



# Quick reads

These 10-minute activities let you spend time with your youngster while helping him become a better reader.

### What am I reading?

Have each family member write down words from a household item and read them aloud. Other players try to guess the source. For instance, you might find “Hand-wash in cold water” on a clothing tag or “Enter” and “Page Down” on a keyboard. The first person to answer correctly goes next.



### Updated nursery rhymes

Read nursery rhymes together. Then, think of ways to change some words to use details from your child’s life. For example, he might say, “Jack and Jill went up the hill to ride a brand-new scooter.” Or you might suggest, “Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet, eating her mac and cheese.”

### Road stories

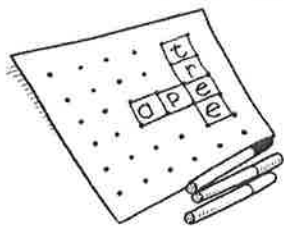
Encourage your youngster to keep a small notebook and pencil in the car. Ask him to choose six to eight words from road signs (“Exit,” “Stop,” “Caution”) and write them down. At home, take turns making up lines of a story that include words from the list. Your tale ends when every word has been used.♥

## Fun with Words Connect the dots



Turn this logic activity into a word game that lets your child practice thinking ahead.

Draw six rows and six columns of dots. Each player chooses a different-colored pen. Take turns drawing a line that connects any dot with the dot that’s above, below, or next to it (not diagonally).



If you draw a line that completes a square, you get to claim the square by writing a letter inside. Your goal is to write letters in connecting squares to spell words. Words can twist and turn in any direction (up, over, down) as long as the letters touch, and you’re allowed to continue a word started by another person.

When every square is full, count the letters with your ink color—the player with the most squares wins.♥

## Q&A Family spelling

**Q** My daughter has weekly spelling tests for the first time this year. How can I help her study?

**A** Consider having your daughter create a “spelling station”—a place where she keeps her word lists, a dictionary, paper, a variety of writing utensils, and a recorder (a cassette player or an old cell phone). Also, include spelling materials like magnetic or foam letters or alphabet stickers.

To study, she can record herself reading her words slowly. Then, let her play them back and spell the words by arranging letters or writing them down.

She can also invite the whole family to use her station for a weekly spelling bee. Take turns spelling words from her list, either out loud or with the alphabet supplies. A speller can request a word’s definition or ask for it in a sentence. This will help your daughter learn the meanings of her words.♥



## Parent to Parent Writing show-and-tell

Our son Chase told us that his favorite part of school is reading his stories to the class. The children write stories all week long, and on Fridays they sit in an “author’s chair” and read one aloud.

So I thought, why not try this at home? Now, almost every weekend, we have a family author’s chair, where each person shares something



he has written. Chase usually reads a story he wrote at school. His older sister, who recently started writing poetry, reads a few poems to everyone.

Then, my wife and I take a turn. We might read an email we sent to a relative about our family vacation or a short note we’ve written for work. I think it has been good for our children to see that adults write, too!♥

**OUR PURPOSE**

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

Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated  
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 540-636-4280 • rfcustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
 www.ifeonline.com  
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# Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

OCTOBER 2011

**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."

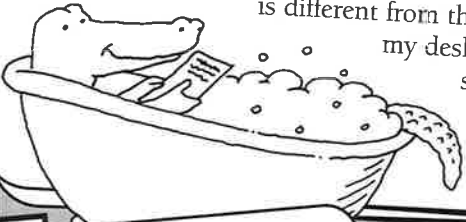
**WRITING**  
**Sentence Switch**

Swapping just one word can change the meaning of a whole sentence! Try this writing activity with your youngster.

**Ingredients:** paper, pencil

Sit around a table. Have one person write a funny sentence at the top of a sheet of paper ("There is a crocodile in the bathtub"). He passes it to the next person, who writes a second sentence beneath the first, changing one or two words ("There is a crocodile in the hallway"). Then, that player hands the paper to the next person, who rewrites the new sentence and changes a different word or words.

Continue around the table until you have a sentence in which every word is different from the original ("I have two monkeys on my desk"). The last player reads the new sentence aloud—and comes up with a new one to start the game again.



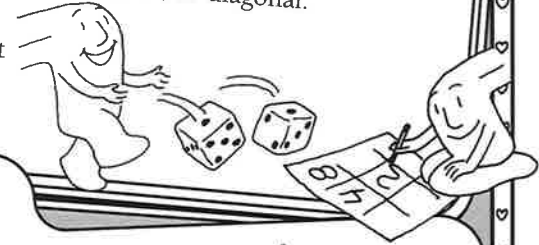
**MATH**  
**Tic-Tac-Roll**

This game lets your child think strategically while she practices addition.

**Ingredients:** 2 dice, paper, pencils

Have everyone draw a tic-tac-toe grid. On each turn, a player rolls the dice, adds the two numbers together (4, 6), and writes the total (10) in an empty square on her board. Take turns until everyone has a full board. Then, players add up each column, row, and diagonal to find their highest total. For example, a row with 2, 5, and 8 would equal 15. The winner is the player with the most points for a single column, row, or diagonal.

Play again, but this time, encourage your youngster to think carefully about where she places each number. How can she get the highest possible score?



**HISTORY**  
**On This Day...**

What happened on today's date 25 years ago? And 25 years from now, what will people remember about today? With this activity, your youngster can discover what makes history!

**Ingredients:** almanac or Internet access, newspaper

Check out an almanac from the library (try *The World Almanac for Kids* 2011). Or visit a website like [www.history.com/this-day-in-history](http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history) or <http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/on-this-day>. Ask your youngster to choose an event that looks interesting and to photocopy or print out the article.

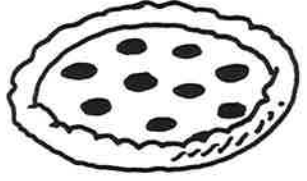
Then, get a copy of today's newspaper. Have him browse the headlines for a story that he thinks will be important in the future (a new country is formed, the World Series has a surprising winner), and let him cut it out.

Finally, ask him to read both stories aloud to your family.



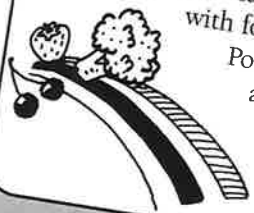
**LANGUAGE ARTS**

Turn reading into a game the next time you're shopping with your child. Pick a word like "park," and have her hunt for an item that starts with each letter in the word. For instance, she might find "pizza," "artichoke," "raisins," and "kiwi."



**HEALTH**

Encourage healthy eating by having your youngster eat a rainbow! On a sheet of paper, she can write colors down the left side and food groups (dairy, fruits, vegetables, grains, protein) across the top. How many foods can she come up with for each color? Post the sheet, and let her cross out each one after she eats it.



# Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

OCTOBER 2011

## Character Corner

### READING Story Suitcases

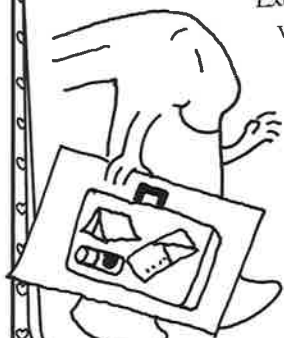
Explore favorite stories by “packing” for a pretend trip. This activity will help your youngster identify a story’s *setting*, or where it takes place.

**Ingredients:** books, paper, crayons

Start by reading several books with your youngster. Each of you secretly choose a setting from one of the stories.

Then, draw a suitcase on your paper and decorate it with pictures of things you’d need to take on a trip to that setting.

*Example:* If the story takes place in the woods, you might draw a tent, a sleeping bag, and bug spray. Exchange “suitcases,” and try to guess each other’s setting.



### MATH

Have your youngster write the numbers 1–20 down one side of a piece of paper. Then, ask him to think of something that equals each number. Encourage him to be creative! *Examples:* 5 = the number of people in our house, 16 = the number of legs on four horses.



### CREATIVITY

Look at clouds with your youngster, and ask him to name the objects they resemble. He might see a rabbit, a clown, or a puppy, for instance. Then, have him make cloud pictures by gluing cotton balls to blue construction paper. Tip: He can stretch the cotton balls to make thinner clouds.



### MONEY

Give your child a handful of pocket change. Ask her to sort it by value (pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters). Then, she can tally each stack and count the total. Suggest that she find other ways to sort and count the money, too. *Examples:* by color, by size, by date.



## Congratulations!

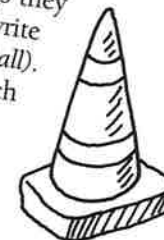
We finished \_\_\_\_\_ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)

### VOCABULARY

Play this game to match adjectives with people, places, or things they describe. Ask your child to write down 10 adjectives (*orange, tall*). In the car, let him call out each word and have everyone race to spot something that goes with it (*orange traffic cone, tall tree*).



### CITIZENSHIP

Good citizens take care of their homes and communities. Together, brainstorm ways that family members can do their parts. For example, raking leaves keeps them from blowing into neighbors’ yards, and returning library books ensures others can read them.



### POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Ask your child to cut 10 circles from colored paper. Then, have family members write a nice fortune on each one. *Example:* “You’ll have good luck in sports today.” Fold the circles, put them in a bowl on the table, and let each family member pick one.



### TRUSTWORTHINESS

Read a few magazine advertisements with your youngster. Are they accurate, or do they “stretch” the truth (“The best deal ever!”) or leave out important details (“Price subject to change”)? Ask your youngster how she can help make sure that people trust her (tell the truth, avoid exaggerating).

