



Linda Ashness
Editor-in-Chief

Rocking Horse Review

February 2010

Director's Corner

Special points of interest:

February 13th-Parent Date Night

March 14th-Daylight Savings
Time/Time Begins-Spring Forward

March 15th thru March 19th-
Spring Break/H.C.I.S.D. Closed

March 13th-Parent Date Night

April 15th Income Tax Day

April 17th-Parent Date Night

H.C.I.S.D. Closed

Feb.15th, Mar.15th-19th,
Apr.2nd&19th

Dear Parent(s):

As our children grow, doctors weigh and measure them to see how tall they are. This information is put on a chart.

The chart shows where our child stands compared to other children and how fast they are growing. These charts help doctors to understand if our children are growing properly or if something may be wrong, enabling them to do something to help as soon as possible.

Just as doctors use children's height and weight as "Well Checks" for your child's physical progress, schools do assessments or "Benchmark Testing" to monitor your child's educational progress. Over the past few weeks, students from our infant pro-

gram through our Pre-K were given a series of short assessments designed to check your child's progress. We use these findings along with our observations from the start of the academic school year to help plan and adjust our curriculum for the remaining portion of the school year to accommodate your child's needs.

At Rocking Horse Academy we always want our parents well-informed; therefore, each year we hold parent-teacher conferences following our assessment, allowing us the opportunity to share this information with you as well as giving you the opportunity to have any questions answered.

Conferences were held Jan.

25-29th from 11 am-2 pm; a sign-up sheet was available at the front desk. Rocking Horse Academy understands that these times or days may not have been convenient for some families, so we included a telephone conference opportunity during each time slot. (Parents were responsible for calling into the school at your designated time.) Please feel free to stop by or contact me at anytime should you have any questions or concerns.

We know you have choices in child care, and we appreciate the opportunity to work with you and your family.

Thank you,

Inside This Issue

Foals I & II	2
Colts	3
Ponies	4
Chargers I	5
Chargers II	6
Pintos	7
Mustangs	8
Trotters	9
Broncos	10
Corral Kids	11-12

Notes From The Library

It's Scholastic Book Fair time! From March 1st until March 5th Rocking Horse Academy will be hosting our 6th annual Book Fair. All profits made from the sale of books during this time are not taken in money, but actual books for the classrooms and library. Last year we received over \$1500 in books ranging from board books for our babies to chapter books for our Corral Kids. Help support your classrooms and teachers while adding fabulous books to your home library and quality reading time for your child/ren. And, as always, I am happy to help you choose books for your child! Happy reading!

Maria Matts
Assistant Director





February themes are **Health, Dental, Black History, Heroes and Feelings.**

Our Spanish words are February-Febrero, teeth-diente, nose-nariz, hand-mano, mouth-boca, feelings-sentimientos, I love you-te amo. Fun songs to sing are "If You're Happy And You Know It" and "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes". Books to read this month are A Visit to the Doctor, Time for Bed and Sometimes I Like to Curl up in a Ball. We will wash our hands to stay healthy. The heart bandana will be out to play peek-a-boo. Our homework is to touch eyes, ears, nose and mouth.

Gardens, Farm, Spring, Insects and Plants are the themes for March. Spanish words are March-

Our February themes are **Feelings, Hero's, Black History and Our Bodies.** To incorporate these themes in our lessons, we plan on looking in a mirror and talking about our feelings, making happy faces, sad faces, questioning faces. The children will learn a new song, "Put Your Finger in the Air" to learn about our body parts, our fingers, and to work on a fine motor skills of managing our fingers separately.

Every day we continue to exercise and work on our gross motor skills: pulling up, balancing, reaching. To practice fine motor skills, we introduce new toys where the baby can put a certain shape into a hole or close/open a toy door.

Our Spanish words are: *love-amor, I love you-te amo, like-gustar, I like-me gusta, please-por favor, and thank you-*

Marzo, garden-jardin, farm-granja, plants-plantas, insects-insectos, spring-primavera. For music we will sing "Itsy, Bitsy Spider" and "Old MacDonald". We will touch and smell stuffed farm animals for sensory. The books for March are Moo I'm a Cow, The Very Hungry Caterpillar, and My First Farm Book. The skill to practice at home is sitting up.

April themes are **Space, Earth, Birds and Recycle.** Spanish words are April-Abril, space-espacio earth-tierra, birds-pajaros, eggs-huevos, recycle-reciclable. We will play with colored plastic eggs for manipulative and physical development. Our music is "Five Little Ducks" and "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star". Books



gracias. Ask your teachers for help learning these new Spanish words and phrases.

With March winds comes Dr. Seuss' Birthday Celebration. Our themes include **Farm Life and Animals, Spring Plants & Growth, and Bugs.** We will introduce a flannel board with farm animals and a barn story book. We will sing *Old MacDonald had a Farm* and begin teaching the sounds animals make.

Our Spanish words are **Dad-Papa, Mom-Mama. Our new signs will be Dad, Mom, and Please.**

April showers bring May flowers. We like to begin our daily stroller rides in early spring to look at the trees budding new leaves and watch the birds flying overhead. This month we focus on **Birds and Eggs, Space, Planet Earth, and Recycling.** We will practice our

for the month are Cool Chicks, Below Us, Under the Earth and Sea and Happy Easter. The homework is to practice tummy time.

When you take your baby to the doctor, please bring a note stating your baby is **OK** to be at school. This may help keep our other babies and staff well. Also, please remember to bring a copy of updated immunization records after shots are received.

We strive to meet the developmental needs of your baby while caring for their physical needs. Thank you for your confidence in us. Enjoy spring.

Foals I Staff



gross motor skills by pushing and pulling string toys. In our Learning Skills center we explore cause & effect. *Our Watch*, the birdie game, will help our babies acquire some balancing skills, depth perception, social interaction and trust.

Our Spanish words are **more-mas, thank you-gracias.** Our new signs will be more, juice, eat.

As always, our children are learning about themselves, their world and their abilities, and we are here to help and encourage them to reach their goals.

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions or comments, please feel free to contact any of us. We enjoy the time we spend with your baby. Thanks!

Foals 2 teachers





How time flies when having fun. Hard to believe it will soon be springtime again. We want to welcome our new Colt friends. We are glad to have you as a part of our family. The next three months will be exciting ones.

The first month is February. We will learn about Health and My Body, My Feelings, Heroes and Black history. The first week we will learn about our bodies and how to take care of them. We will also talk about what foods are good for our bodies. We will practice how to brush our teeth, so please bring in a toothbrush and toothpaste for your child. We will have fun dancing to the **Hokey Pokey** and **Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes**. To help us learn our body parts, we will make handprints and footprints. We will talk about and name body parts in English and Spanish. The second week, we will learn about our feelings and how people express feelings. We will make a collage of smiles. We will sing **If You're Happy and You Know It** and read **I'm Feeling Sad**. We will work on using our gross motor skills by throwing and catching balls and playing **Ring Around the Rosey**. We will

learn how to take our plates and cups to the sink. The third week, we will talk about our heroes and create a wall of heroes. On February 12th, we will have a Valentine's Party. Please look for the sign-up sheet and the class list.

During the month of March we will discuss the Farm. Who lives on the farm? How do plants grow? The first week, we will celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday by making cats and the hats out of our footprints. We will also read some of his books that he wrote i.e., **Cat and the Hat** and **Green Eggs and Ham**. The second week, students will learn about the farm and the animals that live there. We will paint a horse with string and glue a tail on our horse, we will color spots on a cow. For our science center we will learn how to milk a cow using rubber gloves. We will have great fun with that experience. The third week, we will learn about gardening and how plants grow. We will also measure how much we have grown in the last year. As one of the art projects, we will make a spring tree with our handprints. The last week, we will



study bugs. We will make inkblot butterflies, ladybugs out of paper plates, and other fun projects.

The final month is April. We will learn about Space, Eggs and Birds, Our Earth and Environment and Recycling. The first and second week, we will talk about space and make our solar system in the room. We will read a book called **Space**. The third week, we will learn about eggs and birds. We will do a golf ball art project. We will also go on a bird-watching walks and count how many birds we see. The last week we will learn how to take care of our earth and how to recycle our trash. We will play a sorting game and sort paper and plastic items.

Just a few reminders:

- * Please label **everything** with first and last name.
- * Please bring in clean sheets and blankets every Monday.
- * Please bring in a sippy cup with a name on it.

Thank you for your help and understanding.

Ms. Erica

Ms. Lydia

Homemade Playdoh

1 cup flour
1 cup warm water
2 teaspoons cream of tarter
1 teaspoon oil
1/4 cup salt
food coloring

Mix all ingredients (add food coloring last). Stir over medium heat until smooth. Remove from pan, let cool slightly, and knead until blended and smooth. Store in a plastic bag or airtight container when cooled.

In February your child will learn about feelings such as happy and sad. The books for this unit will include The Way I Feel and When Sophie Gets Angry, Really Angry. Our students will learn to identify feelings based on facial expressions. We will also learn about hygiene; cleanliness is very important to us and we will continue to learn how to wash our hands, clean up after ourselves after snack and lunchtime, and to use tissues or our sleeves to cover our coughs and sneezes. The body is another unit that will be covered in February. Your child will learn to identify the basic parts of his/her bodies such as nose, eyes, ears, leg,

March will bring the fun of learning about farm animals! Our students love to repeat animal sounds and pretend to be certain animals such as pigs, horses, chickens, goats, cows, and ducks. You can do this at home as well. Your child will love to show you what they are learning! Spring is here and we will talk about the beautiful flowers, new baby animals, and the weather. We will also name animals in Spanish, for example: cow- vaca, and duck- pato.

Ponies Staff



Welcome to Chargers 1

We promise to be the best at having fun while creating the perfect learning environment. Every interaction is an experience and an opportunity to build a trusting relationship with children and their families. We encourage each child every day with one-on-one, positive guidance, role playing, reinforcing the concept of sharing and being social with his/her classmates. We introduce potty-training by providing a sturdy step stool to encourage self-help with independent hand-washing.

In February these are the following units we will explore: Feelings -- no matter what they are. We will use puppets to help us with scenarios to help us make the right choices when dealing with frustration. Black History week will include stories about our African American hero's from today and yesterday, like Oprah and George Washington Carver. We hope to reinforce the need to respect and love all of our friends. During the remaining weeks, we will discover the names of our body parts and practice making more healthful choices in what we eat like vegetables and milk and drinking plenty water. We want students to begin to understand the importance of grooming their bodies and brushing their teeth and hair, washing their

faces and hands. And we will exercise by taking walks and doing aerobics during our PE period.

Our theme for March is farm life and farm animals. Children love to make the sounds that our farm friends make. We'll sing *Old MacDonald Had a Farm* to help us learn all of the animal noises. We want to teach the students what the name of baby animals are, too, such as calf or puppies or ducklings.

As the weather warms, we plan to create our classroom garden. For our science unit we'll introduce the parts of the plant: stems, petals or leaves, roots. We plan to show and discuss our class plant "Jack", and we will also plant a new class plant. We will name our plant and let the class assist in caring and watching it grow. We will end the month with one of my favorite units: Bugs, caterpillars, bees, butterflies and more. Students can count the legs to learn the difference between insects and spiders. They will sort them depending on which ones crawl and which ones fly.

And April's theme will be Birds & Eggs: blue birds, crows, owls and cardinals. We will build a nest, paint eggs, chirp and fly around the room, and let's not forget about Petey our class parakeet. Students will learn what our feathered friends eat and where they sleep. Not all

birds sleep in the trees; Pete sleeps in his cage on a stick. We will also discuss which birds are winter or summer birds.

Space is our next unit as we introduce the moon and stars, planets, comets, and don't forget a shooting star (meteor). Naturally, we'll sing songs like *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, and learn riddles like *Hey Diddle, Diddle*.

We will end the month with Earth and Recycling. We will study the planet earth and about geography: trees, mountains, volcanoes, and rivers, lakes & oceans that make our earth $\frac{3}{4}$ water. We will use earth as a transition into our recycling and environmental unit. It's vital that our children learn good ecological habits now if we want to keep America beautiful and have enough air, water, and food for their future. We also want to keep our centers clean, so we will encourage children to clean up, even if they did not make the mess. Be a good citizen of the class. We plan to create a recycling center so the students can practice recycling: aluminum cans, paper, newspaper, or a plastic bottle can get a new life to help better our circle of life.

Ms. Laurie

Ms. Cheryl



Promises mean everything, but after they are broken, sorry means nothing.

Unknown

CHARGERS II

Happy New Year Everyone!!!

Starting us out in February we will explore our **Feelings** and will have an opportunity to discuss those during our circle times and throughout the day as the opportunity arises. We can use mirrors and make funny faces to see how we look when we are happy or silly or sad. We will continue with the unit topic **Health** and **My Body**, where we will learn about names of our body parts and how eating healthfully can help our bodies grow. We will sing, "Head, Shoulder, Knees and Toes." Practicing good hygiene, like brushing our teeth, hair and bathing can also keep our bodies healthy. **Black History** and **Heroes** will also be a unit that we will study. That week will include stories about our African American heroes from yesterday and today such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Man of Peace," and our First African American President Barack Obama: "The Making Of a President"

March is right down the road with **Farm** and **Farm Animals**. This will be a week of sounds and songs. We will enjoy singing songs, such as "Old McDonald Had a Farm" and also match the names of baby animals to their parents. For our science unit we will introduce the parts of a plant: stem, petals, root. We will use this time to do a little

gardening of our very own. We plan on planting pinto beans in a clear cup and watching them grow. Each child will have his/her very own plant that he/she will be responsible for. We will learn the importance of watering and caring for our plant to help it grow. We will also briefly remind the students of our previous unit about health, tying into how we need food to grow. We will end the month with the unit on bugs. We will include bees, beetles, caterpillars and more. We will be exploring our Rocking Horse Academy backyard and counting how many different types of bugs we can find. This will be a unit to look forward to.

April's theme will be **Birds** and **Eggs**. We will read books on birds and discuss whether or not we think a chicken, flamingo, and an ostrich are birds and can they fly? Do all birds live in trees? We will be using our thinking skills and endless open-ended questions for this unit. We are looking forward to discussing these answers. These will be posted on our Chargers II bulletin board in the hallway. Please stop by and enjoy their busy minds at work. **Space** is our next unit as we introduce the moon, stars, planets, comets and shooting stars. We will enjoy the songs "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" and the nursery rhyme, "Hey Diddle Diddle". We will finish up the month with **Earth** and

Recycling and discussing ways we can help keep the earth clean and reduce waste, like only using one paper towel when drying small hands, turning off the water when we brush our teeth, turning the light or television off when we are not using or watching them. All the above units will be on our weekly lesson plans and be in your child's daily folder. Please check these regularly as they will also give details of our focus on learning the alphabet, colors, month, day of the week and also be sure to ask your child what songs they sang at circle time.

A friendly reminder from the Chargers II staff, please remember to sign in your child at drop-off and sign out at pick-up daily. Check folders daily. As the weather gets warmer, we need for each student to bring a fresh bottle of water to drink throughout the day. And be sure to label all items: coats, sweaters, jackets, water bottles, and sunscreen.

Chargers II staff would like to thank all the parents for their support in all that we do in our room. Have a wonderful New Year and we look forward to working with everyone!



A word of encouragement during a failure is worth more than an hour of praise after success. *Anonymous*



The next few months will be packed full of fun and learning. I have been having so much fun with all the children. They learn so quickly that it is sometimes hard to keep up. At the age of three those cooperative little guys start turning into independent and sometimes hard headed bigger guys. They start to learn that they can control some situations, like toileting and eating, so they practice that power in those areas by refusing to cooperate. This is very natural and important for them to learn the natural consequences of not going potty or refusing to eat. Our job as caregivers is to let them experience those consequences in a safe way.

Themes and Activities

February is a very exciting month. Not only do we have a chance to appreciate our friendships on Valentine's Day, but we will also learn appropriate ways to express our feelings and learn new vocabulary at the same time.

Keeping our bodies healthy is very important. We do this several different ways: eating healthfully, exercising, and getting check-ups. We will study which foods are healthful foods and which foods just taste good but don't help our bodies grow. We will also learn about the journey our food takes in our bodies when we eat it. We will practice different kinds of exercises, showing the children how fun this can be. To help the chil-

dren understand how important check-ups are, we will talk about and pretend play doctoring and dentistry.

What a perfect time of year to learn about how plants grow and what they need to grow. The best way to learn about plants, of course, is to grow some of our own. We will experiment by planting seeds in different ways and places to see how well they do in each environment. For example, planting seeds in water versus soil, planting seeds in shade versus the sunlight and finding out which combination works best to grow our seeds. Learning about plants is a great way to start learning about why farmers are so important to us and where our food really comes from. Along with plants and farms, we will study fun facts about insects!

In April we are going to talk about where our earth is in space and learn about the stars that we see at night. While studying about earth, it is very important to understand the importance of taking care of our earth. We will be picking up trash outside, learning how to recycle, and how to reuse different materials.

Around Easter time the children see and even decorate eggs at home, so I will take this opportunity to teach the children about birds and eggs and their life cycle. Natural science is always fun to learn about. Also in April we will celebrate how

important the education of our young children is by having a full week of just plain fun!

Social Play

I will concentrate on teaching the children how to enter a group that is already engaged in play. I will do this by giving them some short phrases to use as well as modeling by being a part of their play. Some of those phrases are: "Which blocks may I use?" "I can be the mommy." Another important social skill to learn is how to invite someone else to play with you. I will use the same strategies for this as well. Some common phrases that I use are: "Do you want to build blocks?" "I need help fixing dinner." "Do you want to play chase?"

ABC'S & 123'S



During this time of the year, I have already done an assessment on each of the children. This will give each family a set of strengths and a set of goals to continue working on. Each child develops at his/her own rate, so I will take where each child is and build on those skills. Some of the skills that the children work on are letter recognition, starting to draw familiar shapes like faces, circles and the letters in their name. I will also focus on sorting objects by different aspects (size, shape, color) as well as counting objects.

"Give children encouragement, they will gain confidence,
they will perform better. "

M. K. Soni





The Mustangs classroom has a great start to 2010! We have been working on our letters, numbers, counting to 30, and writing our names. Over the next three months, we will continue learning these skills and add some more skills with fun themes.

In February the first theme we will start with will be our **Feelings**. We will talk about the best way to express our feelings as well as continue to reinforce sharing. During reading time we will read a book called When Sophie Gets Angry. We will then move on to our **Heroes/ African American History Theme**. We will remember people who influenced great changes in America from Martin Luther King Jr. to Rosa Parks. During Social time we will talk about what makes us all special. Since it is 2010, we will then talk about the **Winter Olympics**. We will look at the different sports in the winter Olympics and learn about what it means to be a good sport. During gym we will practice our jumping and balance. The last week of February we will talk about **Health and Our Bodies**. We

will learn how to keep our bodies healthy, like washing our hands and eating nutritious foods. During Science and Discovery time we will look at teeth and the right way to brush. Our letters of the month will be V, F, L, and N. During the month of February we will also sort and graph using Valentine's hearts.

March brings the first day of spring and the Mustang classroom will be learning about plants and animals. Our first theme will be **Farm Animals**. We will learn all about different farm animals and their babies' names. During math time we will be making patterns using farm animals. The next theme will be **BUGS!** We will take a close look at all types of insects. We will learn what makes an insect an insect. During Science time we will look at insects under a magnifying glass. Our last theme of the month will be **Plants**. We will be growing our own plants and naming the parts. During Math time we will be measuring our plants and using comparing words like bigger and smaller, taller and shorter. Our let-

ters of the month for March will be B, D, and Y. During the month of March we will be looking at life cycles during Science and Discovery time.

In April, we will start with an **Eggs and Birds Unit**. We will study different kinds of birds, their eggs, and their nests. During Science time we will be conducting experiments using eggs. Another theme for April will be **Space**. We will talk about planets and their sizes. During Math time we will compare the sizes of the planets. Our final theme will be **Our Earth and Recycling**. We will talk about how important our earth is and what recycling does. We will look around our classroom for items that can be recycled. Our letters for the month of April will be C, F, G, and P. In April we will be putting the planets in order from biggest to smallest.

These months are full of fun themes that will have the kids learning with great lessons; I am excited about them!



Mustang Teachers

This smoothie recipe--simple, healthy, and refreshing! It makes a great "snack" for kids mid-afternoon. It's also a great breakfast drink.

Recipe comes from *Superfoods Rx*

- 1 c. nonfat plain yogurt
- 1/4 c. freshly squeezed orange juice (or bottled, from concentrate, whatever)
- 1/2 c. fresh or frozen blueberries (or any frozen fruit)
- 1/2 very ripe banana

Combine all ingredients in a blender. Blend on medium speed until smooth and frothy. Pour into glasses and serve.

Serves 2

TROTTERS

February is here and so is another newsletter from the Trotter class. The month of February will be spent learning about feelings, heroes, black history, and health & my body. During the first week we will explore our feelings through many avenues. We will gather as a class and graph our feelings at that moment. We will also use a mirror to see our many different facial expressions that convey our moods. Moving through the month we find ourselves celebrating Black History Month. Some of the African American heroes we will discuss include Jackie Robinson, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Madame CJ Walker. The Trotters will also take tips from George Washington Carver on how he invented peanut butter and try our hand at making some. As we round out the month, we move along to health and our bodies. This gives the Trotters the opportunity to learn about the food pyramid and putting healthful things in their bodies. Be on the lookout for a giant food pyramid in the Trotter hallway. Please feel free to stop with your Trotter and ask him/her what foods go in what categories. Just a re-

minder Friday, February 12th will be the Trotter's Valentine's Day Party. Please check your child's folder for upcoming information regarding the party.

March brings all things spring! Farm-life and animals will be the first topics we cover in the month of March. Our block center will become a farm complete with animals and barn. We will spend time as a class charting out our favorite farm animals. March 20th marks the first day of spring. We will spend time outside planting our very own garden. We will learn to till, water, and prep the soil, along with planting the seeds and caring for the plants. When the time comes to reap what we have sown, we will celebrate with a party. Bugs will wind down the month of March. As we pick up our magnifying glasses and head outside, we will become bug hunters in search of the greatest insects of all. Be on the lookout for the leprechaun around St. Patrick's Day; he has been known to leave gold coins in the shoes of boys and girls.



April will be here before we know it, and we're not fooling. It brings topics such as birds, space, our earth and recycling. The Trotters will study the process of an egg maturing to a hatchling. We will also make bird feeders and study what birds we attract with them. Moving to the middle of the month, we focus our attention on space and our earth. We will learn the solar system and discuss the earth's orbit. We will also ask parents to take time one night at home to look at the stars and record which constellations we could see. As the month winds down, we move into recycling. The Trotters will work together and create a recycling center in our classroom. Everyone is encouraged to participate in this endeavor. We will discuss what materials can be recycled and what the materials are recycled into.

As the weather changes once again, please change out your child's extra clothing and don't forget to label. The Lost and Found box is in the lobby full of nice jackets and sweaters with no name. And many of us shop at the same store, making duplicate items common.

Kids and Their Bones

Source: [National Institute of Mental Health](#)

Topics: [Keeping Your Kids Healthy](#) (Excerpt)

But my kids don't like milk.

Drinking milk isn't the only way to enjoy its benefits. For example, try making soup and oatmeal or other hot cereals with milk instead of water. Pour milk over cold cereal for breakfast or a snack. Incorporate milk into a fruit smoothie or milkshake. Chocolate milk and cocoa made with milk are also ways to increase the milk in your child's diet.



Bronco Families,

I cannot believe how quickly time is passing. We are more than halfway through our school year and I am amazed at the change/growth I have seen in your children. We have completed basic short sound phonics for the entire alphabet, and we are now working on letter combinations such as *th, sh, ch, ck, st*, etc... As always we continue to add to our list of sight words. I will be sending home copies of our sight words that you can cut out to make flash cards.

Working on these at home will help the kids recognize them more efficiently. Also, allowing your child to identify words in the stories you are reading will help them develop pre-reading skills.

As a class we are also working on teamwork. The Broncos are a very independent group of youngsters and love doing things for themselves. I admire this characteristic but at the same time we are trying to teach them that it is okay to allow someone to help you.

We have an exciting 3 months approaching. In February we will study Health and the Body as well as Dental Health. We are hoping to have a dental specialist come to talk with the class about appropriate brushing and flossing habits. We will also study Feelings and appropriate

ways to share our feelings. Following Feelings we will be learning and reading about Heroes and Black History Month. This is an interesting topic to share with the kids as most of them do not identify with race at this age. We will approach this topic by introducing the children to some African American historical figures, such as Martin Luther King. We will also have a Valentine Party Friday the 12th. Each child needs to bring in a shoe box to decorate; please begin bringing these as soon as possible.

In March I am pleased to announce that we will study plants and growth. We will be planting vegetables and other plants in pots in the classroom that we will take care of and observe. This will give the children a very basic introduction to the scientific method. We will use this as an opportunity to begin writing as we keep a growth journal. We will learn about farms and farm animals in March as well as Insects and spiders. While learning about farm animals, we will take a field trip to Crowe's Nest. More information to come.

April will be packed full of wonderful themes and activities. We will begin the month with Eggs and Birds, followed by Space, Our Earth and Environment. During our Space theme we will build a model of our

solar system and discuss the importance of our sun. Recycle, Reduce and Reuse will be our motto for the month of April, as we discuss what and how to recycle as well as what it means to conserve vs. to waste. To give the students a better understanding of recycling, we will experiment with making recycled paper. We will end the month with Week of the Young Child. During this week we will be asking for parents to come and join us in the classroom. A sign-up will go out around the second week in April.

For the next few months my academic goals for the Bronco classroom are to improve reading readiness in each child, build vocabulary, add and subtract single digits introduce coins and their monetary values and for those who are ready, begin reading basic sentences. My social goals are to improve peer-to-peer interactions. Especially, working together and including every child.

Parents, I would like to thank you all for your support as we work to give your children the best possible preparation for kindergarten next year. I have truly enjoyed working with your children and look forward to spending more time with them as they grow.

Thank you,

Mrs. Casey & Bronco Teachers

"Listen to the desires of your children.
Encourage them and then give them the autonomy
to make their own decision."

Denis Waitley



Happy New Year Corral Kids and Families!

Wow! 2009 went by oh so fast but we have been very excited for all of the fun things we have planned for 2010. We also would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our new families that have joined us this January. This winter our themes will include; Health Awareness, Kids for Kindness, Everyday Heroes, Going Buggy, Weather Explorers and many, many more. We also will be having our Spring Break/Summer Camp Preview from March 15-19th where each day of the week we will be exploring one of our summer camp themes. On behalf of the entire staff of RHA, we hope that you are already having a wonderful new year and continue to appreciate the opportunity to be your families after school/extended care provider!

Dreaming of Summer Days....

We are thrilled to say we have already had a lot of interest and inquiry about our 2010 RHA Summer Camp Program!!! Some of the events/themes we have planned for our 12 week program include "You've Got Talent!", "Sci Fi Explorers", "Treasure Island", as well as our first ever "Corral Kid Challenge". Summary information and tuition information will be available for our parents by February 1st and as always our Corral Kids family will be eligible for priority registration for summer camp. So be sure to get in on the fun and feel free to contact me, Mary Foster, if you

have any questions at 512-405-3700 or at our Corral Kids email address corralkidsrha@yahoo.com.

Opening Minds in Education

At the end January I will be attending the AEYC (association for the education of young children) Early Education, Child Care and School Age Conference in Chicago, IL which will include over 5,000 early childhood professionals from all across the country. At Rocking Horse Academy, continuing education is not only encouraged but is required for all of our staff members in order to ensure that best practices and new classroom innovations are continually implemented in our programs. Some of the workshops I will be attending include *Connecting the School Day to Out of School/School Age Care, Building Positive Behavior Management, Enhancing Family Services, What You Can Do to Grow Self Esteem in Young Children, and Creating Inspirational Child Care Environments*.

Days to Note

Corral Kids will be offering full day care from 6:30am-6:30pm on the following dates:

Monday February 15th
(Presidents Day observed)

Monday March 15th-Friday
March 19th (Spring Break)

Friday April 2nd

Monday April 19th

Individuals will be able to sign up for care on these days two weeks prior

to the individual dates and one month prior to the week of Spring Break. Texas State's Spring Break will be a different week, so staffing and space will be limited. Sign up early for a spot.

Lost and Found

We have so much left in our lost and found. Soon we will collect what's left and take it to the Thrift Store for donation. If you would label ALL coats, jackets, hats, etc. we could help get these items back with their owner.

Fostering Your Child's Self-Esteem (from Parenting.org)

Each child carries a unique picture of self, shaped in large measure by messages communicated by significant people, especially parents. A child is not born with a self image; a self image is learned through experiences beginning from birth. Self-esteem is the value judgment a person places on self image. This judgment about worth plays a fundamental role in children's growth and development. Children with high self-esteem tend to be more productive, adventure-some and self-assured. They are less likely to consent to peer pressure, frustration or their own shortcomings. The following suggestions may help you raise your child's feelings of self-confidence and worth.

Feel good about your strengths and accomplishments

Your feelings of self-acceptance also affect your child's feelings of per-



sonal worth because your child identifies strongly with you. If your level of self-esteem is high, your positive attitudes and practices are likely to contribute to a family environment characterized by confidence, creativity and curiosity.

Keep your expectations realistic

Realistic expectations lead to repeated successes which, in turn, build healthy self-esteem. Conversely, unreasonably high parental expectations send negative messages. As a result, youngsters' feelings of personal worth erode as they withdraw in frustration or believe they must be perfect to be loved.

Respect your child's unique qualities

Think about the expectations your parents had for you as a child. Consider whether you are placing the same expectations on your child even though your youngster has a different array of needs and talents.

Your child is unlike all others, and should be loved unconditionally for his or her unique characteristics. In other words, it is unhealthy to compare your child with friends, siblings or you as a child. Encourage independence and respect your child's right to fulfill personal potential.

Applaud effort, not just outcome

If your child does not make the team, or win the spelling bee, or play the lead in the school play, pat your

youngster on the back for trying.

While victories are certainly cause for celebration, less obvious achievements should also be noted. Even though your child may not be "first" or "best" or "perfect" in a particular event or activity, he or she should be praised for improving or making an attempt in the first place.

On the other hand, do not overindulge your child with empty compliments. At times you must make negative or corrective statements. When you do, comment on your child's behavior, not on your child. For example, instead of saying "You're lazy!", say, "I'm concerned about your grade in science. What can be done to improve it?"

Corral Kid Parents:

Spring Break Sign Up

Even though it feels like we have just gotten through the holidays we at Rocking Horse Academy already have our thoughts set to Spring Break!!! This year Hays School District spring break is scheduled from Monday, March 15th- Friday, March 19th. This year **Texas State's** spring break schedule will now be **a week earlier than usual**; therefore, a large number of Corral Kid employees that attend Texas State will not be able to work full time that week since they have class.

We are still committed to offering our Corral Kid families the quality care that they have come to expect from our extended care program during our elementary school district's Spring Break, but because of limited staffing, we are forced to limit the number of students we will be able to enroll during that week.

Corral Kid **full day** care will be offered on a first come first serve basis for Spring Break. **Sign up will be available in the RHA lobby as of Tuesday February 15th**. If you have any questions please feel free to ask.

Mary Foster

Supervisor