

Billy Goat Class

Newsletter for December, 2011



The Billy Goats have enjoyed watching the season change from fall to winter. We spent a lot of time playing in the leaves in the llamas' pasture and front yard. We are definitely excited to start playing in the snow!

This past month we had a blast dressing up during Fun Week. It seemed that Backwards Day was a huge success because all of the friends asked to wear their coats backwards. The next week our class turned into bears and our dramatic play area transformed into a bear den. We learned why bears and other animals hibernate. During a science experiment, we investigated how fat insulates our body and how it insulates animals' bodies. The friends gathered leaves and sticks in order to create their own bear den for our art project.

Families:

We have been excited to talk about our families and share our family pages with our friends. We designed our own puppets of family members and read many stories about different families. We also celebrated Thanksgiving by making handprint turkeys and reading Thanksgiving stories. At group time we asked, "What are you thankful for?" The friends' responded with, "My family. Toys. Pets. Doodle. My brother. My sister." They loved sharing these with their friends.



December:

During December we will be exploring snow, talking about germs, and investigating spiders. Please remember to send in winter gear (snowpants, hats, mittens, and boots...NO scarves) with your child every day. Sometimes it is helpful to pack these items in an extra bag.



Thanks!

Shirley and Joy

**Class
Pictures**

**Nature
News**

**Music and
Sign Language**

Getting Ready for Winter: This month in Nature we focused on learning how animals survive the cold and harsh winter. In Pre-2 we learned about migration and the benefits of moving to a warmer climate for the winter. We focused on the Arctic Tern, which migrates from the North to South pole and back every year. We talked about the obstacles that animals face as they travel back and forth and built our own obstacle course to practice migrating. Students practiced making mental maps of the nature room just as animals do when they migrate. We even learned some basic compass skills and the directions.

We talked about how animals use hiding as a way to survive winter. We learned how animals hide in homes, in groups, and by camouflaging. We talked about how birds hide in groups and may join noisier birds like chickadees to avoid predation. The kids played a game of a tag to demonstrate the benefits of hiding in a group. We also learned about how some animals are able to change color to avoid predation. They played a camouflage game by hiding animals around the school and searched them out.

Pre-1 students also played the camouflage game. They also tried on different colored furs to see which would be better for camouflaging in winter or summer. The toddlers tried to find animals camouflaged in winter scenes. We looked at pictures of animals changing colors and tried on different fabrics to pretend to be winter or summer arctic hares.

Pre-2 students learned the difference between hibernation and dormancy. We talked about which types of animals hibernate and why they choose to. Students pretended to be bears and went to the woods to find the best hibernating spots. Later in the week, we also focused on the woodchuck and the legends behind Groundhog Day. Students listened to a poem about the groundhog and illustrated the story with their own pictures. Pre-1 students and toddlers both looked at pictures of a number of hibernating animals. Pre-1 students also looked for places around school to hibernate.

Pre-2 students learned about insulation and how animals use fur, fat, feathers, and winter coats to help them survive the extreme temperatures. We conducted an experiment where students insulated a small container of gelatin. If the gelatin stayed in liquid form, they kept enough heat in; if the gelatin turned solid than it became too cold. We also talked about snow's ability to insulate small animals.

Animal Homes:

Later in the week, we started our transition into learning about homes for animals. We learned about how bees and wasps make nests using hexagons and use their homes to protect themselves in winter. We acted out how honey bees find a new home.

As always we love having parent visitors and artifacts sent from home. We will be learning about animal homes in December and then water in January.



-Emily

Sign Language and Music with Sylvia

Music

In **Music**, we've been learning a variety of dances. Dancing to music comes natural for all ages and a wonderful way for children to express themselves. A few favorites have been "Bow to Your Partner" and "I'm your Friend". They love dancing with partners and it's been fun to see how quickly they've learned the actions for each dance. I also brought in my violin and we had a great time playing a game where the children listened for the contrast between a quiet classical lullaby and the lively fiddle music. They'd pretend they were sleeping to the lullaby and then quickly jump up and dance when they heard the fiddle music. It's been a fun month!

Sign Language

In **Sign Language** we've been learning to sign numbers. Sign Language is a great visual for the children to help in learning number quantity and recognition. They especially enjoy signing with my puppets as we read books, play games and sign songs. We also continue to sign our colors and animals. One of their favorite stories is my flannel board story "Little, Mouse". I have 10 houses, each a different color, where one house has a little mouse hiding behind it. They always love to guess which house the mouse is hiding in. Not only is it a fun story, but it also gives the children the opportunity to use their sign language to communicate a full story, not relying on any voice. Next month we'll begin signing the alphabet.



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-Sylvia