

## Programs Resource Guide - February 2024

### Children's Authors and Illustrators Week – First week of February

Encourage a lifelong love of reading with children by offering books for independent exploration, storytelling and use of props, options to illustrate their own stories, and literacy opportunities.

Create classroom story baskets as an invitation to play for children. Set the stage: consider using a shelf or a table to display and set up the provocation. Add the book and matching props to promote inquiry-based learning. Display a question or a thought to encourage creative thinking.

Story Re-telling Ideas:

- Loose Parts (ex. rocks, sticks, leaves, glass beads, popsicle sticks, wood rounds)
- Puppets, animal figures
- Paper and various colours of paint



Classroom Connection Ideas:

Get creative and make or use a representation of a character from a beloved classroom book and connect home and school, literature and life, as students take a storybook character home with them and take turns sharing stories about the visit. They can take the character on trips, to lessons, a park, and share the experience with their peers.

Creating a Sense of Belonging:

Add pictures of children to the loose parts area for them to see themselves in the stories. Consider laminating full body images or putting the children's pictures on blocks or rocks. See where the children's imagination takes them. Invite the children to play with the images, have images of yourselves as the educators too and see the wonderful play of children. Through this play, you may see some of the children explore their connections with peers.

Build Community Within the School: Library Visit

Communicate with the librarian to request access to the library if possible. Have the children choose books to explore either on their own or have the children choose some books to be read to them. Reading books out loud helps children improve literacy skills, encourages imagination and prompts questioning. These questions are pivotal in children feeling heard and are a great opportunity to build social skills, collaborate with peers, and learn together.

In the words of Dr. Seuss "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."



## **Lunar New Year – February 10, 2024**

What is Lunar New Year?

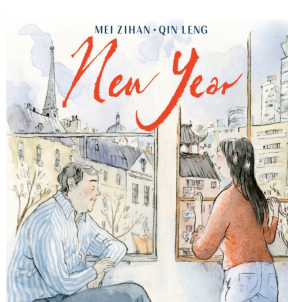
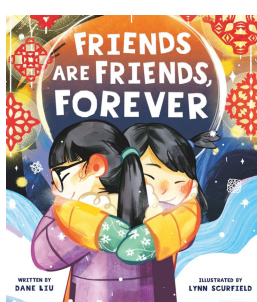
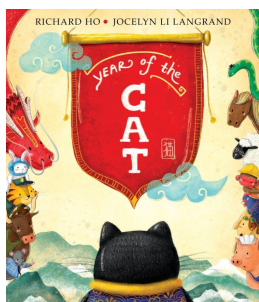
Lunar New Year occurs on the second new moon after the winter solstice. The date is based on the lunisolar calendar based on the sun's position in the sky and the phases of the moon. Just as with New Year's Eve, Lunar New Year celebrations begin the evening before the first day of the New Year.

Though often referred to as "Chinese New Year," the Lunar New Year is celebrated by many countries in Eastern Asia and is observed by communities world-wide. Celebrations can last up to a few weeks, and often conclude with a lantern festival, signaling the end of the festivities.

### **Bringing Lunar New Year Into Programs**

First, ask families if they are celebrating Lunar New Year and learn more about their traditions. If you yourself celebrate, consider sharing your celebrations and traditions with children and colleagues.

### **Book Suggestions:**

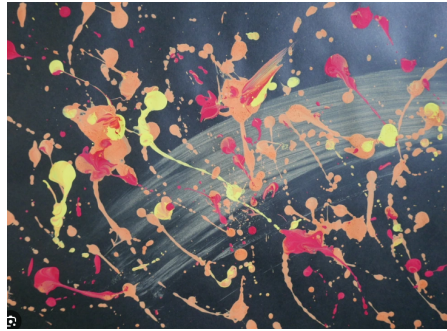


### **Classroom Provocations:**

Dragon Playdough- 2024 is the Year of the Dragon in the Chinese zodiac. Those born in the year of the dragon are said to be energetic, passionate, and enthusiastic. Provide materials for the children to create creatures with playdough. Remember, through a process based approach, we simply provide the materials, and see what the children create.



Firework Straw Painting- Allow the children to get creative with paint and recreate the fireworks that are used to celebrate the New Year.



### **Valentine's Day – February 14, 2024**

Valentine's Day, otherwise known as love day, is on February 14<sup>th</sup>. It is an opportunity to celebrate the people we love. Educators can promote this in their programs by planning and executing a Valentine's Day party with the children. Consider setting up the environment for play with invitations to explore loose parts. Have art activities ready, add new Valentine's books and stories about friendship, love and caring relationships to the book area.

Classroom Provocations:





## Create a Classroom Tinker Tray

What is a tinker tray:

A tinker tray is filled with organized loose parts or found objects. Tinker tray materials can be used for various activities and art making projects. Tinker trays promote open-ended art, creative thinking, problem-solving, and process over product.



Creative Art Ideas:

- Promote child-made art about love using process-based art.
- Supply the children with a variety of materials such as: strips of laces and textured ribbons, buttons, gems and/or paint.
- Let the children cut up old Valentine's Day cards to make recycled art.
- Paint the snow. Weather permitting, have the children use spray bottles with food colouring and water to spray the snow beautiful colours. Bring the snow inside and give the children individual trays filled with snow to paint with water colours or tempura paint. To extend the fun, add molds or cookie cutters for them to make shapes. Don't forget to offer all children their mittens some can be sensitive to the cold.





- Make glittery slime or playdough with the children. Add the tinker tray materials to your playdough and let the children explore the materials together. See where their curiosity leads them in their process of exploration.
- Provide the children with string and multiple beads to make bracelets for themselves or encourage the group to make friendship bracelets for their peers.



#### Nature Based Ideas - Grow Love in Your Classroom:

Plant seeds and teach the children about caring for and giving love to the plant to help it grow. Have discussions around the benefits of caring for plants and others.

Have the children make bird feeders for the animals living outdoors. Explain that all living things need food to nourish their bodies to give them energy and to help them grow.

#### Pinecone Bird Feeder:

Pinecone bird feeders are simple and eco-friendly as this feeder uses nature for its base. To get started on this project you can take the children in your program on a nature walk to collect pinecones in their neighborhood or play yard. To make these feeders you will need the following:

- Pinecones—whatever size and shape you can find
- String
- 1 cup WOW butter
- 2 T shortening or butter
- 2-3 cups birdseed (ensure it is certified nut free)

Tip: if your pinecones are closed up tight, you can pop them into the microwave for 30 seconds at a time until they open up.

\*Reminder to get nut free bird seed and do not use peanut butter products



Wreath Bird Feeder:

- 1/2 cup hot water
- 1 T unflavored gelatin
- 3/4 cup flour
- 3 T corn syrup
- 4 cups bird seed

Directions:

1. Stir together the hot water and gelatin until dissolved (this takes a bit of time and stirring).
2. Add the flour and corn syrup and mix together into a sticky paste, then add the birdseed.
3. Using your hands or a wooden spoon, mix well and then press into a well-greased bundt or tube pan.
4. Allow the feeder to dry for a least 24 hours. After a day, flip out of the tube pan onto a drying rack to let it finish hardening.
5. Tie a scrap of burlap around it and hang it out for the birds.

Valentine's Day Sensory Bin Fillers

Flower Garden: Flowers real or fake, various sized pots, dirt/sand

Hot chocolate station: to-go cups, scoops, white pom-poms or cotton balls, and sand.

Construction of love: Cloud dough, red, pink or purple glass beads, marbles or other loose parts and construction vehicles and containers.

Valentine's Day Science

Use a muffin tin or likewise and place food colouring at the bottom. On top of the food colouring place baking soda. Have small cups or paint containers filled with vinegar and invite the children to use eyedroppers to squeeze the vinegar on-top of the baking soda.

### Baking

Bake cookies, muffins or cupcakes with the children, encourage the children to fill and dump the ingredients into the mixing bowl and have everyone take a turn to stir. Afterwards, the children can decorate their baked goods.



### Random Acts of Kindness Day – February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

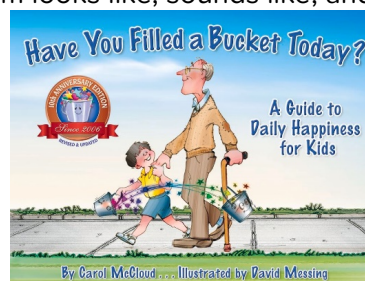


What is a Random Act Of Kindness?

A random act of kindness is a selfless action performed by an individual to help or benefit someone else, without any expectation of recognition or reward. Modelling kindness proactively teaches children about compassion. Ask the children in your group what “being kind” means to them.

### Bucket Filling

Read the book *Have you Filled a Bucket Today?* and brainstorm a list of acts of kindness with the children in program. An example of this could be on a large piece of paper have the children tell you what a bucket filling classroom looks like, sounds like, and feels like to them.





Invite the children to work on filling a classroom bucket or kindness jar. Take time once a week to recognize the power of kindness. Every Friday for example have the children choose another student to write a bucket filler letter to. Encourage them to choose a new person each week. Invite the children to create their own bucket to fill. A bucket could be as simple as a red solo cup decorated individually by each child, a shoe organizer is a great way to store and hold their buckets on display.

Group Kindness Jar: collect tiny pebbles, glass beads, pom-poms, marbles, heart cut-outs as a jar filler and every time a child in your group does an act of kindness they can place one of the items in the jar. Once the jar is full have a super fun activity planned for the kids, something special and out of the ordinary.

Random Acts of Kindness Day is a great time to remember that we ourselves as educators set the example for our classroom. This is a great time to remember our commitment to connection over correction, praise over discipline, and engagement over distraction.

### **Family Day – February 19, 2024**

What is Family Day?

Family Day is a holiday celebrating the importance of families and family life to people and their communities.

Bringing Family Day into Program

Consider incorporating activities that celebrate families into your programming. Have children share stories about their families, play games that encourage teamwork and cooperation. Engaging the children in reading books about families can be a great way to celebrate all types of families. Family Day is a great opportunity to talk about the fact that all families are different and that there are various types of families and family structures. Some books to consider include:



## **Pink Shirt Day – February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024**



Understanding the Significance of Pink Shirt Day:

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, we wear pink.

Pink Shirt Day is a day to raise awareness, as well as raise funds to support programs that foster children's healthy self-esteem. Pink Shirt Day is a movement celebrated across the globe, inspired by an act of kindness in Nova Scotia. Here is a small synopsis of the backstory:

"David Shepherd, Travis Price and their teenage friends organized a high-school protest to wear pink in sympathy with a Grade 9 boy who was being bullied [for wearing a pink shirt]...[They] took a stand against bullying when they protested against the harassment of a new Grade 9 student by distributing pink T-shirts to all the boys in their school. 'I learned that two people can come up with an idea, run with it, and it can do wonders,' says Mr. Price, 17, who organized the pink protest. 'Finally, someone stood up for a weaker kid.' So Mr. Shepherd and some others headed off to a discount store and bought 50 pink tank tops. They sent out message to schoolmates that night, and the next morning they hauled the shirts to school in a plastic bag. As they stood in the foyer handing out the shirts, the bullied boy walked in. His face spoke volumes. 'It looked like a huge weight was lifted off his shoulders,' Mr. Price recalled. The bullies were never heard from again."

— GLOBE & MAIL

Pink Shirt Day is a day to reflect on kindness, empathy, compassion, and community building. Let's help children build the framework of being kind humans. The cultivation of empathy and kindness holds paramount significance and is a fundamental building block for healthy social interactions. Both parents and caregivers play a pivotal role in nurturing empathy in children. Modelling empathetic behaviour is essential; children learn by observing the actions and reactions of those around them. Demonstrating kindness, patience, and understanding sets a powerful example.

- Encouraging open conversations about emotions creates a safe space for children to express themselves. Ask about their feelings, validate their experiences and provide appropriate words for emotions. This verbal expression enhances emotional intelligence and lays the groundwork for empathy.
- Engaging in activities that promote teamwork and co-operation is another effective strategy. Whether through group play, collaborative projects, or shared problem-solving, children learn the value of working together and understanding different perspectives.
- Storytelling is a powerful tool to instill empathy. Narratives that feature characters experiencing various emotions and dilemmas offer children opportunities to empathize with fictional situations, which can translate into a deeper understanding of real-world scenarios.
- Teaching kindness involves emphasizing the positive impact of thoughtful actions. Encourage simple acts of kindness, such as sharing toys or helping a friend in need. Positive support strengthens the connection between kind behavior and positive outcomes, reinforcing the importance of empathy.

#### Anti-Bullying- The Toothpaste Experiment

Gather the children to discuss kindness and invite the children to share with you what being kind to another person could look like. Then ask them something that could be an un-kind thing to do. Ask them how that would make them feel and acknowledge and validate those feelings. Get a tube of toothpaste and a paper plate. Have the children take turns squeezing the toothpaste onto the plate or model this yourself. After all of the toothpaste is out of the tube, ask the children how to get the toothpaste back inside. No materials can be used to help. The children will realize the answer is simple, it cannot be placed back into the tube—just as acts of unkindness and unkind words cannot be unsaid.

#### Put-Ups

Have the children use sticky notes, pieces of scrap paper or have them cut their own heart shapes. Then provide the children with writing materials to write out something kind about some of their peers. Encourage the children to write about their friends and also peers they may not interact with normally. As an educator you can make a put-up board to display the children's put-ups, as well as your own. Be sure to recognize when you see a child acting in a kind manner or achieving new skills.

#### Relationship Building

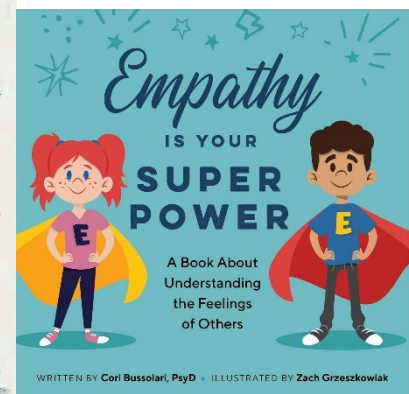
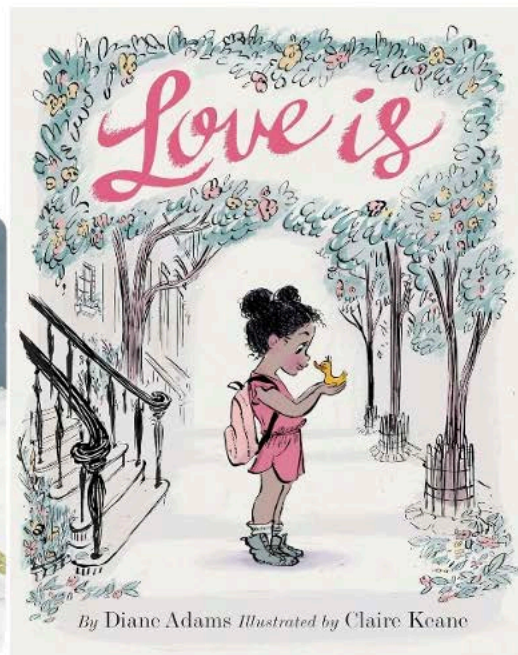
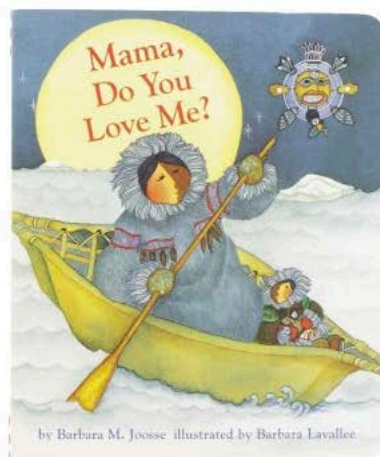
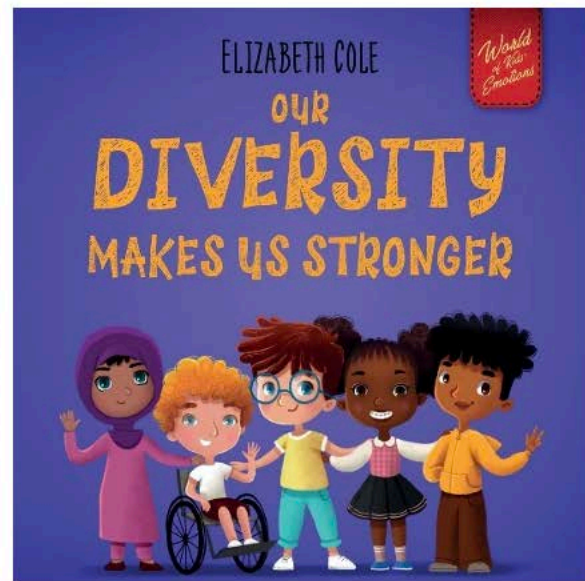
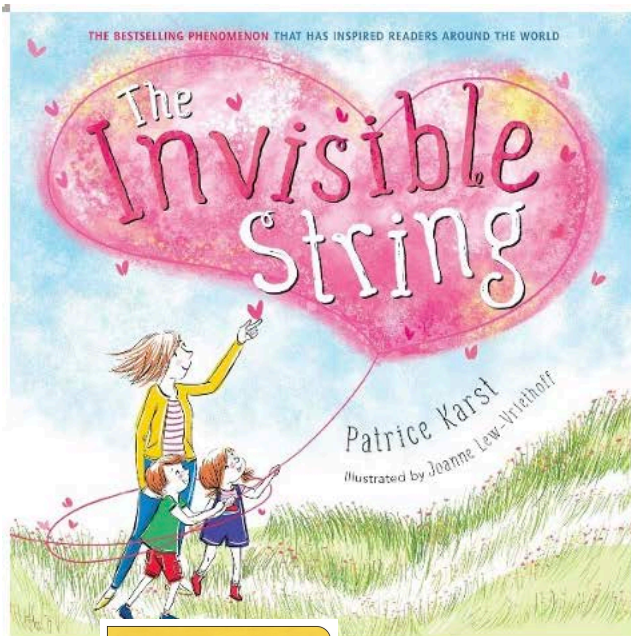
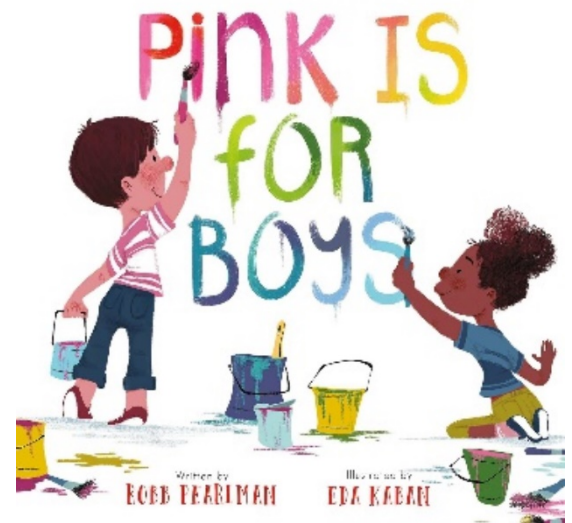
As humans, we naturally want to interact with one another. As educators, our role is to set up a healthy environment that allows children to interact positively with one another. A great way for children to build relationships is to collaborate and work together to solve problems. Winter outdoor play is an opportunity for children to play and create together. The snow creates a natural sensory environment for children outdoors with various opportunities for play. Adding toboggans to the play area can encourage the children to work together to pull one another around, look for and find their own hills to explore and slide down.

#### Kindness and Love

February is month focusing on new beginnings, good luck, kindness and love. As educators, you are the example for kindness and love in your programs. We encourage you to build strong relationships with the children in your group, and support their growth into kind, empathetic, and connection-minded people.



Additional Children's Books  
Love and Kindness



Resources for educators:

<https://happyhooligans.ca/story-stones/>

<https://worldchangingkids.ca/archives/7189>

<https://worldchangingkids.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Acts-of-Kindness-Advent-Calendar-2021.pdf>

<https://www.teachstarter.com/au/blog/random-acts-of-kindness-activities-kids/>

Pink Shirt Day Resources

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59de3c753e00be15fdb9d2ee/t/5ff2b23d232e037c66ce44fc/1609740863199/Bullying%2BTips%2Bfor%2BParentsCaregivers%2BTipsheet.pdf>

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<https://www.almanac.com/content/chinese-new-year-chinese-zodiac>