

# KNIGHTLY NEWS

FALL 2004

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**WELCOME** to the inaugural edition of *The Knightly News*, a quarterly update on what is new at Knight Hall, both in the school and on our website ([www.knighthallschool.org](http://www.knighthallschool.org)). It is designed to provide not only newsy updates, but also information of interest to those supporting the growth and achievement of young children. This publication is meant to be yours, as friends and family of Knight Hall. I hope you will contact me and let me know what you would like to see in this publication, and how I can improve it.

*Knightly News* is designed as an e-newsletter and will be delivered by email to Knight Hall families and friends. If you did not also receive this issue by email, please contact me ([martha@knighthallschool.org](mailto:martha@knighthallschool.org)) so I can add your email address to the distribution list.

*Martha*



## A SIGN OF THE TIMES

Knight Hall School is finally updating the sign that hangs in front of the school. Thank you very much to Brian Colbath for designing and creating the new sign, and to the families of the 2003-04 Orange Room for funding the materials. It will look something like the picture above when it is completed!

## ROOM PAGES ONLINE!

The room pages are almost complete. This is the space on the website for your child's teachers to share their thoughts, and information about what your kids are doing at Knight Hall School. Did you lose the last newsletter, or forget when the field trip is? Never fear, just click here. Check out the classroom wish list and see the latest photos. This area of the site is password protected, so keep the user ID and password being sent you safe. And don't forget to let us know what you think. Are there any other features you would like to see on these pages? Please let me know at [martha@knighthallschool.org](mailto:martha@knighthallschool.org)



## RAINY DAY FUN

It is fall in New England. Beautiful foliage, crisp, cool, breezy days and rain, sometimes lots of rain. What can we do with our energetic children on a rainy day? Puzzles, board games, crayons and toys just don't help when it comes to using up that pent up energy. What's next? Try some of the below ideas.

### Pillow Battle

1. Gather as many of the biggest, heaviest pillows you can find from all over the house.
2. Take them into a hallway and place half at each end of the hallway.
3. Close all the doors leading to the hallway and remove picture frames from the walls.
4. Throw them at each other as fast as you can.

### Bubble Stomp

1. Push furniture back to make plenty of space.
2. Line floor with bubble wrap. The kind with the big bubbles is the most fun, but any bubble wrap will do.
3. Start hopping.

WARNING: Popping and giggling tends to get pretty noisy!

### Shake your Boody

1. Put on some fun music.
2. Shake it up baby now. Twist and shout!

### Pillow Hopscotch

1. Take cushions off the couch.
2. Set them on the floor in a hopscotch shape.
3. Remove any objects within falling distance.
4. Hop, hop and hop some more

### Over, Under and All Around

1. As long as you already have the pillows off the couch, grab some other items and create an indoor obstacle course.
2. Use your watch to time to see who can go over the pillows without touching the floor, under the end table (a bigger challenge for mom and dad), and around the block tower without knocking it over in the shortest amount of time.

### Not a Cake Walk

1. Find 7-10 paper plates.
2. Write a quick crazy activity on the top of each paper plate. Ideas include "Kiss the dog;" "Stand on your head;" "Oink like a pig;" "do a somersault;" "Tickle mom;" "Do 10 jumping jacks;" etc.
3. Tape the paper plates in a big circle, upside down on the floor so you cannot read the activities.
4. Put on fun music and walk or hop from paper plate to paper plate.
5. Stop the music suddenly.
6. Everyone look under your paper plate and do whatever it tells you to do.

### Flashlight Tag

1. Push the furniture back to create a big space. Make sure there are no sharp corners sticking out in the room!
2. Take turns shining a flashlight on the floor while the others run after it and try to catch it with their feet.

### Try also:

Tug of War with a blanket

Do the Hokey Pokey

Red Light Green Light

Use a 2x4 as a balance beam

Cut a hole in a box and throw bean bags or milk bottle tops into it.

OR just pull on your big boots, ignore the rain and go splash in the biggest puddles you can find!

Do you have another favorite active activity for a rainy day? Please share your favorites by emailing me at [martha@knighthallschool.org](mailto:martha@knighthallschool.org). Thanks!—*Martha*

## WHAT IS EMERGENT CURRICULUM?

Have you ever wondered what exactly *emergent curriculum* means? Here is an excerpt from a new essay on the KHS website. To read the essay in full, visit <http://www.knighthallschool.org/curriculum.htm>.

There is no preplanned workbook or planning binder for the KHS curriculum. It emerges from the children and teachers working together, from teachers with the time and skills to actively listen to the children's desires and act upon them. Teachers change and modify curriculum easily in response to things that happen in the course of the day. An unexpected question often leads to an interesting discussion, development of a new center or activity, or an opportunity for a parent

to share a special skill with the children. Our child-centered approach requires teachers look carefully at children and create an adaptable program that meets their needs. Teachers plan thoroughly, but implement plans flexibly.

By actively observing children at play, Knight Hall teachers learn about the developmental progress of individual children and what skills and knowledge they are working on. They listen to children's ideas and interests, and connect their curriculum goals with those of the children in responsive and creative ways. Planning emerges from the children's interests and daily life in the program. This is our emergent curriculum.—*Martha*

## PRACTICE PROBLEM-SOLVING WITH CHILDREN

Learning to think creatively to solve problems is a key skill for academic and life success. Figuring out unfamiliar words, doing challenging math, and getting along with friends all take creative thinking. Trying to work things out before getting help increases a child's sense of responsibility and self-esteem. Here are some things you can do more often to help children develop this ability.

**Ask questions that require thought.** Instead of telling a child to do something, or even explaining why it's necessary, sometimes take the time to ask "how will your feet feel if you go out in the snow in those sneakers? What shoes will be warmer?"

**Ask for alternatives.** Instead of helping her balance that block tower, ask if she can think of a shape that might be more stable.

**Point out problem solving and praise it.** When a child attempts to solve a problem, praise the effort, even if it doesn't

work. "Good thinking to pull the step stool over to the sink. What else can you try so you can reach the faucet safely?"

**Offer toys that require reasoning skills.** Blocks and other building materials, card games, and puzzles are all good choices. And such toys often build brain power in other ways, for example by helping children learn about patterns that help with math skills, to make connections that build pre-reading skills, to build small muscle strength and control that helps with writing, and to learn patience that helps build attention span.

If you have questions, or want more ideas, please ask your child's teacher or Martha (or email me at [martha@knighthallschool.org](mailto:martha@knighthallschool.org)). We are glad to talk with you about easy ways to support your child's learning at home!—*Martha*

## DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR!

Please add these upcoming events to your calendar!

**Annual Potluck Dinner 11/17**

**Picture Day 11/23**

**Closed for Thanksgiving 11/25 & 26**

KHS Calendars available for download from: <http://www.knighthallschool.org/family.htm>

Calendars are updated regularly, so be sure to check back often!

## NEW LINKS TO EXPLORE

Have you browsed through any of the links on the Resources pages yet ([www.knighthallschool.org/links.htm](http://www.knighthallschool.org/links.htm))? Look there first, next time you are looking for good parenting advice, what to do ideas, or information about books for or about children!

Below are some of the latest links to give you a taste of what's there. Check out our website at [www.knighthallschool.org/links.htm](http://www.knighthallschool.org/links.htm) to get to the complete list. If your favorite family site is not there, please email [wendy@knighthallschool.org](mailto:wendy@knighthallschool.org) and let us know so we can include it.

### Tufts University Child and Family Web Guide

<http://www.cfw.tufts.edu/>

Tufts University Child and Family Web Guide describes trustworthy websites on child development and parenting. All sites listed have been evaluated by child development grad students and faculty. The sites have been selected from the thousands available on the Web, based primarily on quality of information. Sites are listed in five main categories: family/parenting, education/learning, typical child development, health/mental health, and resources/recreation. The WebGuide is also searchable by age group.

### Family First

<http://www.familyfirst.com/>

FamilyFirst.com claims to be the web's oldest and leading site for family-friendly web site reviews. You can search their database for sites, or browse their amazing list of fun sites. The listing provides good, detailed descriptions of each site. The topics are sometimes unusual and surprising. That is part of the fun.

### Children's Software Revue

<http://www.childrensoftware.com>

Children's Software Revue (CSR) provides a magazine and reviews of children's software, video games and other interactive media products. The editors' mission is to help parents, children's librarians and teachers leverage technology to support the development of children by providing timely, accurate reviews of commercial interactive products, including educational software, videogames, smart toys and web sites.

### Children's Book Council

<http://www.cbcbooks.org/index.html>

Beside the wonderful lists of great books, the Children's Book Council site includes great information about all our favorite authors and illustrators. I especially like the list of "75 authors/illustrators that everyone should know", which includes brief descriptions of their most well known books.

## INTRODUCING NEW FACES

Have you seen some new faces at the school? Take a minute to welcome these new staff members when you see them! Check out [www.knighthallschool.org/staff.htm](http://www.knighthallschool.org/staff.htm) to read more about them.

Brenda, Purple Room

Ann, Orange Room

Naia, Yellow Room

Colleen, Music Teacher

## WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE FIRST ISSUE?

What else would you like to see in *The Knightly News*? Is there a particular topic you keep meaning to ask your child's teacher about? Or were you looking for particular ideas on something or another? Do you wonder what meals work the best for kids in the yellow room, or how you can help your child develop his small motor skills without making writing a chore? You are probably not the only one. Please let me know and I will gather information from the KHS staff for you and publish the information here for the benefit of the whole KHS community. Drop me a note in the morning, give me a call at 232-9015, or email me at [martha@knighthallschool.org](mailto:martha@knighthallschool.org), and thank you for your ideas and feedback!—*Martha*