

Theme: Welcome Back!

Date: September 8, 2020

Hello StrongStart families,

We hope everyone had a fun and safe summer. StrongStart will re-open on **Monday September 21st** on a sign-up basis. There will be no drop-ins accommodated at any of our centres at any time. Stay tune for more information from your local facilitators on pre-registration information! In the meantime, enjoy some back-to-school content from Teacher Sonika (from Moberly) and circle time video from Ms. Stella (from Mackenzie).

The first week of school is all about getting to know the students and their families. "All about me" activities are great for young children to not only learn and share more about themselves but also learn about others! Let's try a few of those activities today:

Faces: Self-Portraits



- There are many ways to make a self-portrait. You can draw with markers and crayons or paint with watercolours. You can also decorate a paper plate by using buttons, cotton balls, yarn or pipe cleaners.
- You can ask the children to use a mirror to look and talk about their features. What features do they have that are the same as others? What features make them unique?

While you are making the self-portrait, you can sing this song (to the tune of Frere Jacques):

*I'm special, I'm special.
Look at me, look at me!
I'm very special, I'm very special.
Look at me, Look at me!*

You can sing this song to your child as they are looking into the mirror. Change the words from "I'm special" to different emotion words like "I'm happy" or "I'm sad" and encourage your child to make the face (e.g., big smile for happy or frown for sad). This is a great way to explore feelings as children see their own faces relate to a certain emotion.

Names: Tracing their First Names



- Recognizing their own name is a big, first step in having their own identity! It first starts when they are little and they begin to recognize their own names being called. When they enter school, they begin to recognize their names in written form. Later, they will start to write their own names.
- If children are not ready to write their own names, there are other ways to practice name recognitions. For example, you can write out their name and they can paint over it with Q-Tips or stamp over it with their fingertips.
- You can also try writing the child's name on a piece of paper and placing it on the bottom of a tray. Pour some salt over the name and gently shake to distribute the salt over the writing. Your child will still be able to see the name underneath so they can trace the letters by moving the salt with their fingers.
- If the whole name is too long for toddlers, we can start with the first letter of their name. You can write out the first letter and encourage them to stick little pieces of coloured paper of it. You can also make the first letter out of playdough or natural materials like sticks or pebbles.

To finish up this email, join Ms. Stella for a fall circle time - <https://youtu.be/5-pZGJiPjiw>