



Curious Learning Collective's

GUIDE TO

Starting the Day with Intention & Community:

**SIGNING IN, COUNTING IN, SOFT STARTS,
MORNING MEETING, CALENDAR, AND WEATHER**



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Starting the Day with Intention & Community

SIGNING IN

WHY HAVE CHILDREN SIGN IN?

- Example of purposeful writing
- Opportunity to teach letters and letter formation in context
- 1-1 support and coaching for those that need it
- Daily sign in supports meeting foundations for name writing, letter recognition, sound recognition, concepts about print, and others

WHAT FACTORS CAN BE ADJUSTED?

Easier	Harder
Matching photos or names	Writing letters & names
Vertical Surface	Horizontal Surface
Large area	Small area
Hand over Hand	Tracing lines
Tracing lines	Using a Model
Model Above	Model Next-To
Working on 1-2 correct letters	Working on all correct letters

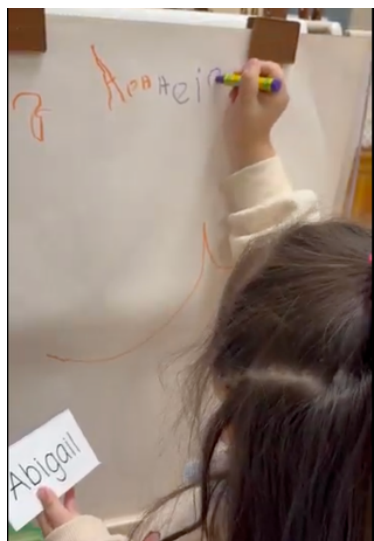
What are some possible ways to sign in?



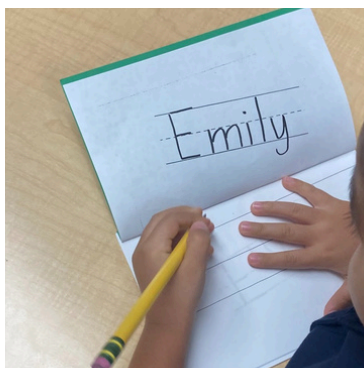
IDing Names, Moving Them



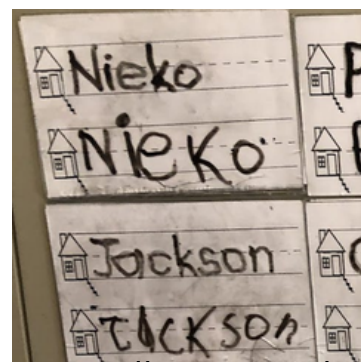
Sign In Book/Sheet



Find & Write



Booklets



Wall-Mounted
Erasable Strips

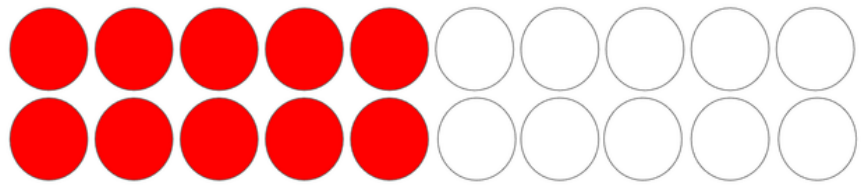
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COUNTING IN

WHY HAVE CHILDREN DO A COUNT IN?

- Example of math and counting in context
- Opportunity to teach 1-1 match, counting sequence, quantity
- 1-1 support and coaching for those that need it
- Daily count in supports meeting foundations for counting, quantifying, 1-1 match and other math foundations

What are some possible ways to count in?



Images of your kids (or names) to velcro on

Moving images (or names) of your students onto ten frames or rekenrek with velcro.



Moving an object such as a stone, stick, card, etc into a tray or basket.



Asking a daily question.

SOFT STARTS & MORNING BOXES

WHAT IS A "SOFT START?"

- Soft Starts invite children to enter the classroom and engage in low-pressure activities of their choice.
- A morning box is a way to separate specific activities and materials from what is used at other times of the day.



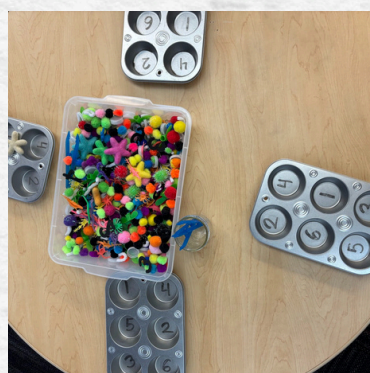
WHY DO A "SOFT START?"

- Gives children (and you) a chance to reset from the chaos of the morning.
- Provides opportunities to work 1-1 with children on name writing, counting, emotional regulation.
- Smaller, discrete invitations develop more focused skills (eg scissor use)

WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE SOFT STARTS OR MORNING BOXES?



Name practice



Games



Building



Puzzles



Self-directed



Art or drawing

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MORNING MEETINGS

Morning meetings offer groups a chance to connect, check in, look ahead at the day, and build community. Here are a **menu of options** for how to do that without screens. Some groups might do one of these things, while others may incorporate several into a routine.

GREET EACH OTHER

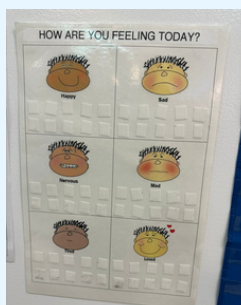


A basket of song choices.

A few song ideas:

- [Donut Shop](#)
 - [Up the Ladder](#)
 - [Hello Friends with ASL](#)
 - What are your students' favorite songs? Use some of those!
- Or... just keep it simple and warmly welcome everyone to school.

CHECK IN



SEL check in



Bundles of 10 sticks counting how many days in school.

- Collect [weather data](#) on a clipboard. What does that mean for outside time?
- Have students name how they are feeling or what [zone](#) they are in.
- Use [ten frames](#) to record who is at school and who is absent.
- Count the number of days in school and use sticks to collect bundles of 10. Mark the day on a 200 chart.

LOOK AHEAD



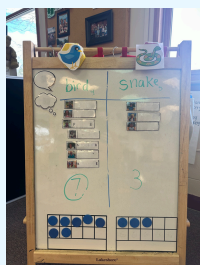
Co-constructed calendar



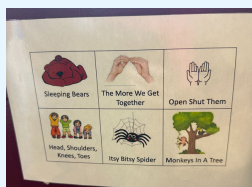
Visual schedule

- Preview the day ahead with a visual schedule.
- Cut up a year long calendar and hang it horizontally in your meeting area- left to right. Use it to note seasonal changes, the passage of time, birthdays, days in school, etc.
- Co-create a monthly calendar with your students or use a simple [printable](#).
- Make plans for next steps.

BUILD COMMUNITY



Question of the day



Song/Game Choices

- Play a favorite [game](#).
- Sing another song or have a dance party
- Tell a story, read a quick read aloud, or write a book together.
- Study children's [names](#).
- Engage in community problem solving or a class discussion.
- Invite children to share a favorite joke or have an open mic.
- Respond to a question of the day. Tally results.

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CALENDAR



An inquiry into a "morning calendar."

WHY SHOULD WE HAVE A CALENDAR?

- Helps children understand **concepts of past, present, and future**
- Implicitly works on the **number sequence**
- Leads to **purposeful math** (How many days until my birthday? Let's count)
- If children help make parts, supports **number formation**
- Provides **structure and clarity** to children who thrive with knowing what comes next.

HOW CAN WE MAKE IT MORE RELEVANT?

- Treat calendar like an inquiry**– what are children noticing and wondering?
- DO NOT DO the whole routine***
- Consider having a **full year calendar posted**, but don't make a huge deal about it, let the children **discover things** about it (season, holidays, vacations) and then use that to drive discussions
- Connect the day to the **concept of time**, not just number
- Make time at other times for children to explore the year long calendar and engage in **purposeful exploration** (How many days till your birthday? How long ago was the first day? etc)

* singing the days, naming the months, naming the seasons, yesterday was, today is, tomorrow will be, exploring the pattern of the cards, etc etc etc

WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE CALENDARS?

Wednesday, November 4th, 2026						
The Month is November						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Yesterday was	Today is	Tomorrow is				
1 Home Day	2 Moggie's Birthday	3 Art	4	5	6	7 Home Day

Weekly or Monthly Calendars with relevant details. Could be pocket charts or hand-made.

AUGUST							SEPTEMBER							OCTOBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4						1	2
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Whole Year Linear Calendar Option 1: Rip up a full year calendar and post each month side by side (August– August, all months)

			November									
29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Whole Year Linear Calendar Option 2: Make it like a number line (it will be very very long, even when its small)

WEATHER



WHY SHOULD WE STUDY THE WEATHER?

- **We shouldn't every day, to be honest**
- We should do weather when children are **noticing and curious about changes they see**
- Weather is about **observation and understanding scale**: what is hot v. warm? What is cloudy v. partly cloudy?
- Weather is also about understanding **transformation**: how does the weather change in a day? Across a week? Across year?
- Weather is a **hands on observable phenomenon** that has impact on children's lives: Why do I have to wear a coat? Why can't we play outside?

HOW CAN WE MAKE IT MORE RELEVANT?

- **Don't report on the weather, study the weather.**
- Approach it like an inquiry, not a rote report- **what are children saying about the weather? How can we deepen their understanding?** How do they understand words like "hot" or "cloudy"?
- When children are interested in the weather, check on it several times within the same day, **have a station or notebook** where children can record temperature and sky conditions over time.
- **Provide visuals for what temperatures** are considered "hot" v. "warm", "cool" v. "cold" and compare the daily temperature to the scale, and also how children *feel* (I may be cozy and warm even though it's cold outside, why?)
- Help children **understand concepts** like "partially" or "scattered"

WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE WEATHER RESOURCES?

A weather notebook for observations, photographs, drawings.

A weather vocabulary chart with photographs

A temperature scale with images, vocabulary, and possibly outdoor gear recommendations.