Message from Me Educator's Guide

Message from Me is made possible by the gracious funding from PNC Grow Up Great

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Welcome to Message from Me

The Educator's Guide is designed to support your daily routines, learning experiences, and interactions with children when implementing Message from Me. This guide serves as a starting point for your Message from Me journey…the possibilities are endless!

The Educator's Guide includes:

- **Classroom Management Tips:** Ideas for "getting started" with Message from Me, including simple, easy ways to implement into your curriculum and educational setting.
- **Activity Ideas:** Designed by educators in the field, and adaptable to meet the unique needs of your children, families, and educational setting.
- **Educator Prompts** and **Family Prompts** to guide implementation and enhance communication between the child and recipient to bridge the home-school connection. Tips to support dual language learners and culturally and linguistically diverse families is also included.

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Part 1. Classroom Integration of MFM

The Educator's Role as a Media Mentor

As educators, we play a critical role in the lives of children and families to support the evaluation, selection, and integration of digital technologies. Digital technologies can play an innovative and powerful role in the learning process, and children and families need our guidance and expertise in child development to navigate best practices. By building collaborative relationships with families as media mentors, we can encourage balanced, healthy media habits that enrich digital experiences for all children.

10 Tips for Using Technology and Interactive Media with Young Children as Media Mentors

1. **Remember that relationships matter most**- Using technology with young children begins with low tech, high-touch opportunities for interactions, shared experiences, discoveries, and joint-engagement with media.
2. **Integrate technology use into social and emotional learning**- Technology should be used in ways that support cultural and linguistic abilities, positive social interactions, mindfulness, creativity, and a sense of initiative.
3. **Use technology as a tool**- Technology is one more important tool you can put in children's little hands for exploring, learning, and creating: it is not more or less important that other tools children use to learn in the early years.
4. **Trust your instincts**- Focus less on how many minutes a child engages with screen media and more on the quality of the content, the context for using media, and the level of engagement.
5. **Empower children to use technology as a tool for 21st century learning**- Select technology that encourages inquiry, exploration, discovery, documentation, and demonstration of what they know.
6. **Provide beneficial technology experiences**- Offer media experiences that are engaging and interactive; include positive interactions with others, give the child control, emphasize interactions, language use, and relationships; and invite co-viewing and joint engagement with media.
7. **Make media use a language-rich experience**-narrate your own use of technology and talk to children about what they are doing when they are using screen media; ask questions, make comments, and suggest what they can do after the scree is turned off.
8. **Help children progress from just consuming media to creating it**- When paired with the curiosity and creativity of a child, simple tools like a digital camera can become powerful media creation tools.
9. **Pay attention to your own technology use in front of children**- Children learn media habits and how and when to use technology by observing the important adults in their lives.
10. **Be a media mentor**-Young child need to be safely guided in the digital age by trusted adult role models who are active and intentional media mentors.

Donohue, C. (2017). *Family engagement in the digital age: Early childhood educators as media mentors.* New York, NY: Routledge.

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Time Management

How often should we use MFM?

- It depends on the individual needs and unique abilities of your children. We encourage weekly usage by each child. More frequent usage is acceptable as well. However, monitor the administrative website to make sure all children are using MFM appropriately and equitably.

Photo Guidelines

Set Classroom Policies for Photographs:

- As you guide children using the Message from Me system, here are some basic policies regarding photographs. You may need to add more to fit your context.
    - Pictures should not be taken of children whose families have not given permission for them to be photographed.
    - Pictures should be of appropriate content, e.g., no bathroom or changing photos.
    - Children may be uncomfortable having their photo taken by another child. Guide children in proper photo taking etiquette; for example, model for children by asking permission before taking someone's photo.

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Part 2. Classroom Approaches for MFM Use

Tool for Documentation and Assessment

- MFM photos and audio recordings can serve as a tool to document children's growth and development. For learners with diverse needs, MFM provides a unique opportunity for educators and families to document and assess children's language development.

Group Messaging

- The Group Messaging feature and **Family Prompts** can be used to send a message to all recipients describing an activity or special event. *Family Prompts are available in the Activity Ideas for MFM*. For example:
    - "This week will be visiting the zoo. Ask your child questions about the zoo animals; such as, what animal was your favorite and why?"
    - Send a reminder before the event.
    - Take a photo of the stage of your class play, a poster with date and time details, special items children need to remember to bring, or a conversation starter to encourage children and families to discuss the event before it begins in English and Spanish.
    - Share highlights during the event.

Learning Center

- MFM can be used as a child-centered choice in which MFM is open to all, at any time.
- Turn Taking Chart - A chart listing all of the children can be hung in the classroom. Place velcro next to each child's name. Make a small picture to represent the MFM. The picture is hung beside the child who has the MFM turn. After a defined amount of time or messages sent, the picture moves down to the next child on the list.

Classroom Job

- Options for using MFM as a class job.
    - One child has the MFM job and has the turn to take the pictures for that day, week, etc.
    - One child is responsible for making sure all of the children in the class have a turn (best for older children).
    - If a group message is sent, the child with the MFM job can send the message for the group with adult guidance.

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Part 3. Before You Begin: Setting the Stage for Effective MFM Use

The following activities are designed to support you and your children to use MFM, and should be implemented in the recommended sequence before the children begin using the technology tool routinely. Reviewing these concepts periodically will help strengthen children's digital wellbeing.

Classroom Instruction

Communicating Experience with a Photograph

MFM was intentionally created to provide a child an opportunity to share meaningful experiences with their families. Encourage children to communicate with their families in their home language. Listed below are example questions to scaffold the experience for a child.

- What would you like to share?
- What did you do that was new today?
- What do you want your family to see / know about your day/work/project?

Framing a Photograph

Prior to introducing MFM, use a cardboard picture frame to allow children to "practice" framing their potential subject.

Using a Camera

Once children have become comfortable taking pretend pictures with the cardboard frames, allow them to take photographs with a digital camera. You can either print the pictures or allow children to view them on the computer. Talk with the child about the photograph.

Telling a Story about My Picture

Work with the children on telling meaningful stories with photos. Use the book, "Off We Go" by Beverly Abramson to practice storytelling or take some photographs of the class and ask them to tell a story about the picture. Guide child as they tell stories about their MFM photo. Encourage children to plan and practice their story before recording. Continue practicing storytelling using photographs, wordless story books, or allowing the children to share an experience.

Key Vocabulary to Integrate into Instruction

General Vocabulary

- Aim (the camera) – to point the camera where you want to take the photo
- Articulate – to speak clearly and slowly
- Audio - sound
- Camera – a machine that takes pictures
- Choose – to think and then select
- Communicate – to share your ideas with someone
- Focus – to see clearly
- Level – to hold the camera straight
- Introduce – to tell another person who you are
- Message – what you want to tell the recipient about your picture

- Microphone – a tool that transmits or record sounds
- Power Button – the on and off switch
- Recipient – the person who will get the message
- Record – to talk into the microphone so that you can hear your voice later
- Select – to choose
- Sender – the person making the message
- Still – not moving
- Volume – how loud a sound is

Digital Tools

- App - software
- iPad - tablet style computer
- Amazon Kindle – tablet style computer
- Android – tablet style computer
- Internet – a global computer network that provides a variety of information
- iPad - tablet style computer
- Microphone – a device to capture sounds
- Robot – a machine that is designed with human like abilities
- Tap - touching the buttons on the iPad screen
- Wireless Internet – a way to connect to the internet

Enhancing Communication

General Educator Prompts to Deepen the Experience

- ***Report Back* –** When a message is sent, encourage children to report back to the group the next day on the interaction with their family at home.
    - Ask guiding questions such as:
        - Did you look at your message? Who showed it to you?
        - What did you tell them about the photo?
        - What did they ask you about the photo? Do you have an idea for a new message to send?

Family Engagement

- Prepare families on the use of MFM in the classroom and at home. For culturally and linguistically diverse families, providing MFM resources in the child's home language is encouraged.
    - General family prompts that could be used or adapted for any activity are: Who? What? Where? When? Why?

Please note: Ideas for more specific prompts are included in the activities listed below.

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Part 4. Activity Ideas for Using MFM

In this section, you will find activity ideas designed by educators to support educational professionals integrating MFM. The activities are organized by universal early learning standards and content areas; including:

- **Social and Emotional Development**
- **English Language Arts**
- **Mathematics**
- **Science**
- **The Arts**
- **Health and Physical Development**
- **Approaches to Learning**

Family Prompts are also included in the description of the activity. Websites such as Google Translate are great resources for translating **Family Prompts**.

We encourage you to have fun and be creative with MFM. Please share your ideas with others through the MFM Facebook group!

NOTE: Any activity using Message from Me will meet the following content areas and standards:

Speaking and Listening

Computer and Information Technology Integration

Self-Awareness and Self-Management: Persistence and Attentiveness

Family Engagement: Supporting families by providing information that encourages their child's learning and development.

**The following pages contain detailed activity ideas grouped by universal early learning standards and content areas. **

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CONTENT AREA:
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

STANDARD: SELF-CONCEPT

Development of Self-Concept

- ***Sharing Accomplishments*** **-** When children approach educators to share an accomplishment, the children can record the accomplishment and send it to families. The teacher can also be part of the message to the families.
- ***Selfie*** **–** Have the child take a "selfie" and ask them to describe details about themselves; such as, hair color, eye color, facial features, etc.
    - **Family Prompt –** Create a self-portrait at home based on the photo sent. Create a family self-portrait as well and compare with the child.

Development of Self-Expression and Self-Awareness

- ***Personal Preferences*** – Have each child take a picture of something they like or do not like to demonstrate awareness of the child's preferences.
- ***Personal Introductions*** – MFM can be used to teach children to introduce themselves to others. When using the MFM, encourage children to say, "Hi ____. This is _____. I took a picture of _____. Good-bye."
- ***Expressing Feelings*** – MFM can be used as a way for children to communicate their feelings to their family throughout the day. For example, encourage children who are experiencing separation issues to send a message to let family know how they are feeling. For a child who has lost a tooth, they can report their emotions via a message. Have the child answer the question "I feel…" as a prompt for their message.

STANDARD: SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Development and Demonstration of Pro-Social Behaviors

- ***Class rules*** - While learning about class rules, children can send a message about the "rule of the day." For example, if the rule is "be a kind friend," children can send messages of ways they see others being kind.
- ***Thinking*** **of You** – Send a happy birthday message home to a family member. Send a message to cheer up a teacher or family member who is sick.
- ***Schedule*** – During the typical daily schedule, have photos taken and sent to families that demonstrate the daily schedule the children follow.
    - **Family Prompt** – Encourage children to share with their families about their daily schedule. Ask guiding questions; such as, what is your favorite part of the day?

Cooperation

- ***Reflection*** – At circle time, children can use MFM and take a photo and describe what they liked most that day and share the photo with his/her peers.
- ***Pickle Problem*** - Complete a "pickle problem" where a problem that is addressed in the classroom is solved. Describe and discuss a problem or conflict and different solutions.
    - **Family Prompt** – Have the family member ask what solution was used or decided on as the best option, encourage discussion of problem solving at home with adults and peers, and make at home pickle problems.

- ***Class Jobs*** - As each child begins a new class job, photograph the child completing the job and let the child send a message describing the responsibility.

STANDARD: KNOWLEDGE OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Progression of Understanding of their Role in the Family and Community

- ***Getting to Know You*** - Use MFM as a way for children to learn information about peers / adults and introduce them to their family. Children can ask a question of a peer and send it as a message. "This is a picture of Bob and he likes to eat Cheerios."
- ***Family Night*** – Set up a parent night to show families the class and to share artwork. Prior to this meeting, have each child send a photo of a favorite area to families saying "I like to play in blocks. I want to show you blocks."
    - **Family Prompt** – At Open House Family Night have families visit the area their child sent them a photo of.
- ***Culture*** - Have children send a message to families about children's favorite family traditions or food. The children's favorite cultural meals can be graphed in the classroom.
    - **Family Prompt** – Families can send in the recipe for their child's favorite cultural meal to create a classroom cookbook.
- ***Family Traditions –*** When planning a lesson on different family traditions, have children send a message to families asking them if they would like to volunteer to speak to the class about family traditions.
    - **Family Prompt –** Ask families to share with children about different family customs and traditions.
- ***Favorite Building*** - Ask each child to create a replication of a building they know in their town and send it as a message.
- ***Doll House*** – Children set up furniture in a doll house and a take picture of the room. The message can include details such as the names of furniture and name of room.
    - **Family Prompt** – "Tell me what you put in your _____? Does this _____ look like our _____? What furniture is the same/different?"

STANDARD: DISPOSITIONS TO LEARNING

Intrinsic Motivation for Learning

- ***Describing Time, Making a Plan -*** Children can send a message indicating an activity they want to do in the future. For example, "Tonight I will / want to _____." "Tomorrow, I will / want to _____." "This weekend, can we _____?"
    - **Family Prompt -** Discuss the child's plan. If the message says, "Tomorrow, I want to wear my blue striped shirt," help the child to find the shirt and wear it.

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CONTENT AREA:
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

STANDARD: SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Any activity using Message from Me will meet this standard.

Expressive Language

- ***Self-Expression*** **–** Child will take a photo of themselves using MFM and describe their outfit and why they like their outfit.
    - **Family Prompt –** Engage in a conversation about different types of clothing.
- ***Storytelling*** **–** Children will choose a story to retell with the option of using puppets, props, etc. Using MFM to send a photo of their favorite story and audio record the child retelling the story.
    - **Family Prompt -** Send a separate photo of questions for families to ask about the story to extend the learning at home.
- ***Show and Tell*** **-** Take a photo of a child during show and tell. Ask the child to audio record a description of what they chose to share with the class.
    - **Family Prompt –** Encourage families to ask questions about what other children in their class brought to show and tell.

Receptive Language

- ***Report Back*** **–** When a message is sent, have the child report back to the group the next day on the interaction with the family at home. Ask: Did you look at your message? Who showed it to you? What did you tell them about the photo? What did they ask you about the photo? Do you have an idea for a new message to send?
    - **Family Prompt -** Ask family members to engage child in the process of sending/receiving the message.
- ***Book Reactions*** **–** Read a story such as *The Gingerbread Man*. Have the children retell the story with props. Use MFM to take a photo of the child when acting out the story. Ask the child to share a message with their family members; such as, my favorite part of the story was… or the characters were…
    - **Family Prompt –** Encourage family members to ask questions about the story. What story are you reading? What was your favorite part and why? Who were the characters?

STANDARD: FOUNDATIONAL READING

Book Appreciation and Knowledge

- ***Parts of a Story*** **–** Children describe characteristics of the characters in the story of the week.
- ***Favorite Book Extension*** **-** After children send messages about a favorite book, encourage them to send messages about a favorite character in the story or the plot of the story.
- ***Real vs Imaginary*** - Children send home 2 messages - one that is fact (real) and one that is fiction (imaginary). Families have to decide which is which. For example, the fact message could be "I had a bagel for snack" while the fiction message could be "A pig visited us for snack today."

- ***Favorite Book*** - Each child can take a picture of the cover of a favorite story to send home.
    - **Family Prompt** - Encourage families to go to the library and find the book to read together.
    - **Group Message Prompt** - Send home a picture of the books read to the class during the course of the day.
- ***Facts*** - As new topics are explored, children can share facts about the topic with families. For example, if studying transportation, children can share facts about kinds of vehicles.
- ***Book Reactions*** **-** Each child can send a message about a book they/the class read today. Encourage the child to share why they liked or did not like the book.

Print Concept

- ***Environmental Print*** **-** Send photos of environmental print (names, product logos, etc.) through the use of MFM. The children will also read the print as the accompanying audio file.
    - **Family Prompt –** Assist children in discovering more environmental print at home and encourage them to find familiar print and logos.
- ***Letter Scavenger Hunt*** **–** Hide letters around the room. Each child is given a specific letter to find, photograph and send as a message.
- ***Printed Materials*** – Encourage children to send home pictures of printed materials around the classroom. For example, if you label your centers, children can send a picture reading the words as the message.
    - **Family Prompt** - Ask your child to read the words in the photograph to you.
- ***Names*** **–** Have each child identify the first letter of their name. Then, ask the child to find something in the room that also begins with that letter. Document with a photo and oral description of what the child found.
    - **Family Prompt –** Ask questions about what other objects, places, or things may start with the same letter. Encourage children to bring in items that begin with the same letter that their names begin with.

Phonological Awareness

- ***See a Sound*** – Ask each child find an object in the classroom that begins with a certain letter sound.
- ***Practicing Verbs*** – Ask children to send a photo and matching message using a verb to describe the action. Throwing a ball (pretending), jumping off the step, etc.
- ***Word of the Day*** **-** Introduce a "Word of the Day" during circle time. The children could send a picture message of the word with the object it represents. For example, the word could be "sink". Each child could take the word to the sink and photograph the word and the sink together while reading the words as part of the message. It could also be an action word such as "jumping" and the child could take a picture of a friend holding the word while jumping.
    - **Family Prompt -** Have the child read the word in the message to you and then find that object in your home to connect the word to the object or action.
- ***Morning Message*** **-** Encourage children to send home a photograph of the morning message and audio of them reading the message.

- ***New songs, rhymes or chants*** - When a new one is taught, you could send a group message of the class reciting it or each child could send their own message.

STANDARD: WRITING

Early Writing

- ***Name Writing –*** Encourage children to write their name. Use MFM to document accomplishments by taking a photo of the child's work and sharing the photo with their family members.
- ***Mail –*** Ask children to create mail or a letter to send. Using MFM, the child can take a photo of the mail/letter and audio record the child's thoughts as they are creating it.
- ***Journaling -*** Children will use a combination of drawing and writing ideas in a journal. Ask the child to take a photo of their work to share with their families.
    - **Family Prompt –** What did you choose to write about? Tell me more about it.
- ***Writing Center -*** Encourage children to create illustrations and then dictate a story about it as the message.
    - ***Note - This can be used as portfolio documentation***
- ***Finish the Story*** – Have children write a story or journal. Leave the story unfinished. Let the student dictate the story to their family member and end by asking "How does the story end?"

CONTENT AREA:
MATHEMATICS

STANDARD: COUNTING AND CARDINALITY

Number Names

- ***Counting songs -*** As a group message, sing a counting song to send to families to teach them the song.
    - **Family Prompt -** Practice the song at home.

Counting to Tell the Number of Objects

- ***Counting Activity -*** When counting concrete objects, children can send a message showing how many objects they can count especially if it is a new milestone in counting for that child.
- ***Number of the Day -*** Send a group message explaining that tomorrow's number of the day is 5. Ask each family to send in 5 of the same items (pennies, Kix, etc.). A group message could be sent to then show what everyone brought.
- ***Picking up Fallen Snow –*** Place cotton balls around the room and have groups of children use tongs and pick up "snow" to collect in cups. Discuss, count, and chart the snow each child picked up.
    - **Family Prompt –** Place cotton balls around one room in the house and use tweezers or kitchen tongs to pick them up. Count the quantity together.

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STANDARD: OPERATIONS AND ALGEBRAIC THINKING

Composing and Decomposing Numbers: Addition and Subtraction

- ***Building* –** Ask children to build a tower with a number of blocks. If the tower was previously built, they can add or subtract blocks. Use MFM to document the building process and capture the child counting the blocks or a completed photo of the tower.
    - **Family Prompt -** Encourage families to ask their child questions about the tower activity with the blocks while using terminology such as subtract, add, construct.
- ***Clapping Patterns*:** Have children clap a pattern and send it as a message.
    - **Family Prompt:** Listen to the pattern together. Have the child clap their pattern and ask you what should come next. Clap the pattern for your child and let them tell you if it is correct.

STANDARD: MEASUREMENT AND DATA

Direct Measurement

- ***Units of Measure*** – Measure items in the classroom. Find something that is 1 foot or 1 inch. Send a message home showing the item being measured.
    - **Family Prompt** - Find an item at home that is the same size.
- ***Measuring Steps*** - Use footsteps to measure various distances to places in the classroom. Each child selects a distance to measure at home (i.e. bed to bedroom door). The child then sends a message of his / her feet showing how to step with the toe touching the heel with the message "I think it will take ___ steps to go from ____ to ____."
    - **Family Prompt** - Complete the activity and help the child write down their findings to bring to school.
- ***Long Jump*** - Use a tape measure or yardstick to measure how far each student can jump. Send a message showing the child's feet next to the tape measure and say how far the student can jump. Repeat the activity later in the year and compare jumping distance by reviewing the original message on the MFM website.
    - **Family Prompt** - Ask families or siblings to try the long jump at home. Let the child count the number of feet jumped.

- **Weight -** Use a balance while exploring the weights of classroom objects. Ask the child to place two objects in front of balance. Child sends a message to guess/predict which object will be heavier.
    - **Family Prompt** – Family asks child which object was heavier. Talk about if guess was correct or not. Look for two items at home that you can guess which will be heavier and compare guesses.

Representing and Interpreting Data

- ***What Doesn't Belong?*** – Children sort objects by: use, category, shape, etc. Once sorted, add another object that doesn't belong in the set. Take a picture of the set. In message, child asks parent, "What doesn't belong?"
    - **Family Prompt** – Ask child "How did you sort the objects? Why doesn't the _____ belong? You find something at home to add to the set?"
- ***Height in Water Bottles*** – Ask "How many water bottles tall are you today?" Have the children write down their predication. Photograph them being measured by the water bottles. "I thought I was ____ bottles tall, but I am _____ bottles tall."
- ***Graphing*** - Share class graphing activities with family members by taking a picture of the children making the graph or of the completed graph. The child can explain the graph in the message.
    - **Family Prompt -** Ask your child to count the number of each graphed item and explain it to you.
- ***Transportation*** – Children could go outside and see how many different types of transportation they can find. Children create a chart and capture in a photo.
    - **Family Prompt** – Families can take children for a walk and ask them to identify the difference types of transportation.

STANDARD: GEOMETRY

Shapes and Spatial Reasoning

- ***Shape Search*** (or color, number, etc.) - Ask children to find a certain color, shape, or number of objects and send that as a message to a family member.

CONTENT AREA:
SCIENCE

STANDARD: SCIENCE AS INQUIRY

Foundational Knowledge of Scientific Inquiry

- ***Physical Characteristics*** - Children can send messages describing their own traits. "I have blue eyes - what color are your eyes?"
    - **Family Prompt** - Discuss other similarities.
- ***Changes at School*** - When a change occurs in the school such as new materials or room arrangement, children can send a message explaining the change.
    - **Family Prompt** - Talk about the change at school. Extend the conversation by discussing any changes in the home.
- ***Class Experiments*** - Have children record messages of scientific explorations and findings in the classroom.
- ***Planting*** – Discuss the types of plants and vegetables the class would like to plant in the class garden. Send a group message to families asking their predictions about what will be grown.
    - **Family Prompt** – Ask about what will be planted in the garden. They may also possibly plant a small garden or plant.

- ***Dinosaur Puppet Show*** – Children can send pictures of dinosaur play to families.
    - **Family Prompt** –Encourage families to send in books and pictures of dinosaurs. Possibly a trip or virtual field trip to a Museum of Natural History: talk specifically about which dinosaurs you learned about.

Utilization of Inquiry

- ***Growing*** - When planting seeds, have children document each phase of the process - planting, sprouting, growth, blooming, etc. This can be extended to developing tadpoles, hatching eggs, and transforming caterpillars.
- ***Patterns*** - Ask children to find a pattern in the classroom such as stripes or spots and send a message explaining the pattern.
    - **Family Prompt** - Find a similar pattern at home.
- ***Collections*** **-** After creating a collection of materials, children can send a message describing their collection.
    - **Family Prompt -** What did you collect? Why did you choose these objects?
- ***Sorting Classified Collections*** **-** After sorting the collection, children can send a message describing their sorting rule.
    - **Family Prompt -** Have the child explain the rule used for sorting. See if you can find any objects that would fit the criteria. Make collections and sort them at home.
- ***Changes in Matter*** **-** Send a group message at the beginning of an experiment and again at the end. For example, if shaking cream into butter, a group message can be sent when the cream is put in the jar, while the children are shaking the container, when the butter is made, and when the children are tasting the butter. (This activity can also be done with materials that melt such as ice or wax, mixing paint, dissolving sugar or salt, etc.)
    - **Family Prompt** - Ask the child to describe the butter making process depicted in the messages. Try the activity at home.
- ***Seasonal Clothing*** - Have children sort into groups of who wore gloves vs. mittens, shorts vs. pants, etc. Send a group message showing the sorted groups and describing how many children are in each group.
    - **Family Prompt** - Discuss why you would choose to wear those clothes based on weather conditions.
- ***Loose Parts Play*** **–** Use recyclable objects in a creative manner to build new things out of materials that would otherwise be thrown away. Take pictures of the new creations to share with families. Talk about the importance of taking care of our earth and recycling/reusing items to reduce amount of garbage.
    - **Family Prompt –** Encourage families to send in items to add to our "loose parts play" collection. Host a loose parts party for children and families.
- ***Guess What's Growing*** **–** Children will take a picture weekly of the same plant and send home a group message saying, "What do you think we are growing?"
    - **Family Prompt –** Families and children will discuss what is growing and create a picture of what they think it will look like.
- ***Mystery Sounds*** **-** Set up a center with items that make noise (for example, instruments). Have the child take a picture of the whole table and then choose one item to make a sound that they record in the message - "Hi. This is ____. Can you guess what made this sound _____?" The family has to guess what item made the sound.
    - **Family Prompt** - Guess the sound. Play the game at home.

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STANDARD: SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Understanding the Living and Physical World

- ***Life Cycle Stories*** - Send a series of messages documenting the life cycle of chicks, tadpoles, ladybugs, etc. Send a new picture each day showing the progress or at each new phase in the life cycle.
- ***Class Pets*** – Have children photograph class pets and send a message.
    - **Family Prompt -** What kind of pet is this? How do you take care of it? What does it eat? Where does it live in the classroom? Can you hold it?
- ***Class Experiments with different types of matter*** - After discussing solids, liquids, and gas, have children record messages of the observations. For example, a child can photograph a melting ice cube and describe the situation.
    - **Family Prompt -** Find examples of solid, liquid, and gas at home to discuss.
- ***Magnet exploration*** **-** Send messages depicting objects that are attracted to magnets and objects that are not.
    - **Family Prompt** - Use a magnet at home to find three objects that are attracted to a magnet and three items that are not. The child can report the findings to school the next day.
- ***Weather Report*** – Take a picture of the weather every day in the same location. Later, review the pictures with the children on the website. Look at pictures for different lengths of time such as at the end of the week, over the course of a month, or pictures from each month of the year.
- ***Shadow Puppets*** – After a visit to the planetarium or a lesson about the sun as a star, set up a flashlight so that children can make shadow puppets against a white wall. Cover the flash on the camera and take a picture of the shadow puppet. The child can describe the shadow puppet.
- ***Why I Have a Shadow*** - Outside, have children locate their shadows on the ground and take a picture. Describe why they can see their shadow using MFM.
- ***Puddles and Creeks*** **–** Send a group message home for the family members to ask if they saw any puddles or creeks on the way home. Take a walk around the school to see if the class can find any bodies of water on the walk.
    - **Family Prompt –** Families can ask if the child saw puddles on their way home or during any point in their day.
- **Earth Day –** Clean up a yard for Earth Day and recycle materials collected. Talk about the importance of taking care of the environment, read books, and research photos about it. Send group messages showing the yard before, during, and after the cleanup, or send a message showing the items collected and sorted for recycling.
    - **Family Prompt –** Encourage families to help children recycle at home and allow them to sort items to be recycled.
- ***Mud Day*** – Celebrate National Mud Day on June 29th (facebook.com/internationalmudday, www.worldforumfoundation.org). Send messages showing how you celebrated.
    - **Family Prompt** – Talk about Mud Day. How did you celebrate? What did the mud feel like? How did you create mud?
- ***Recycling*** - Children and teachers will discuss ways to protect the environment. The children can send a message about how recycling is done at the school. Have the children take

pictures of the center's Abitibi (paper retriever) and the box where we recycle our paper in the classroom.

- **Family Prompt** – The family member and child could brainstorm how they could protect the environment at home, e.g. collecting litter in the neighborhood, recycling cans.

CONTENT AREA: THE ARTS

STANDARD: MUSIC

Self-Expression

- ***Ballet Positions*** – Learn about the different positions in ballet. Children can demonstrate the position and name the position or describe what they learned about ballet.
- ***Favorite songs*** - Encourage children to sing a favorite song and send it as a message.
  - **Family Prompt -** Listen to the message and have the child sing the song with you.

Foundations of Music (FM)

- ***Musical Instruments*** - Encourage children to take a picture of a favorite classroom instrument and play it as a message.
  - **Family Prompt -** What is the name of the instrument? Listen to music and see if you can hear that instrument in the song.
- ***Rain Sticks –*** Create various musical instruments with pipe shaped objects, such as, rain sticks. Capture the process by taking photos and sharing audio with families.
- ***Recording Music –*** Record a child singing a song learned in the classroom. Take a photo and share the audio with the families.
  - **Family Prompt –** Play audio with the child and ask him/her to sing the song with you. Encourage the child to teach you the song.

STANDARD: Visual Art

Self-Expression

*Any activity using Message from Me will meet this standard***.**

- ***Representation of Artwork* -** Encourage children to take pictures of their artwork.
- ***Demonstration of Creative Artwork* -** Encourage children to take pictures of items not easily brought home (playdough creations, block structures, collaborative work).
- ***Art Critique*** – Take a picture of someone else's art. Ask children to express their reaction to the art. I like/dislike this. Ask children to describe something they like or dislike about it.
- ***Artist Study*** – Children choose a specific piece of artwork or artist to study. The teacher can encourage children to create their own artwork during the study. Take a photo with MFM and ask the child to share their work.
  - **Family Prompt –** Encourage the child to create a similar art piece in the home. Bring back artwork to share with the class.

Foundations of Visual Art (FV)

- ***Drawing to Music*** – Play a piece of music. Ask children to draw along to the music. Photograph their drawing and play the music in the background as the child describes their picture, how the music makes them feel, or what the music makes them think of.
- ***Circle Patterns*** – Use toilet paper or paper towel rolls to create circular patterns with various colors of paint. Send a photo of the pattern.
    - **Family Prompt** – Use the same materials with different colors of paint and explore new patterns and designs with circles.

STANDARD: DRAMATIC PLAY

Self-Expression

- ***Community Helpers*** – Encourage children to dress up as different community helpers such as the letter carrier. Send a message where the child describes what they learned about that type of community helper.
- ***Nursery Rhymes*** – Act out nursery rhymes as a class. Use props and dress up clothes to help tell the story. Take a picture of the performance and send a message with the nursery rhyme narrative.
- ***Building a Performance*** – Create a puppet show or other class performance. Send a group message each day showing the progression of the project and describing what the children created today.
    - **Family Prompt** – Encourage families to come see the performance at the end.
- ***Role Play –*** As a class, the children re-create a story in the dramatic play area. Capture photos from the show to send to families. Record audio of the children in costume and communicating with one another.
    - **Family Prompt –** Encourage families to engage in play at home and create stories with their children.
- ***Shopping –*** The teacher can set up the dramatic play center as a store with prices on items that can be bought, play money, and a cash register. The children can send pictures of their "play" (exchanging play money for goods) to their families
    - **Family Prompt –** Families can ask their children what they bought at the classroom store, how much it cost, and what kind of store it was. They can also talk about what they buy at what stores.
- ***When I Grow Up*** – Children can read books about different community workers. Then they can dress up like the community worker that they would like to be when they grow up and send a message to their family about it. They could say, "I want to be _____ when I grow up."
    - **Family Prompt** – After families receive the message, they can ask their children why they chose the community worker that they did and what the community worker's job consists of. They could also take them to visit someone in their community that has that job.

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CONTENT AREA:
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

STANDARD: SAFETY PRACTICES

Safety Practices

- ***Classroom Rules*** – As we learn and continue to use classroom rules have each child demonstrate or speak about classroom expectations.
    - **Family Prompt** – Talk about all the classroom rules, see if they are similar to rules at home, and talk about what rules families follow at home.
- ***Fire Drill*** - Document a fire drill by taking a picture of everyone meeting outside at the designated meeting location. Send a group message to let families know there was a fire drill today. Let families know where the class meeting location is and ask, "If there was a fire at home, where would your family meet?"
    - **Family Prompt** - Encourage families to practice a fire drill at home and designate a meeting location for the family.

STANDARD: HEALTH PRACTICES

Healthy Development

- ***Documenting Healthy Routines*** - Early in the year, have children take pictures of healthy routines such as washing hands and send a message describing the procedure to family members.
    - **Family Prompt -** Ask the child teach the family the healthy routine.
- ***Mealtime*** - At mealtime, allow children to send pictures of what they are having for lunch or snack. The MFM helper could send this as a group message daily or to highlight particularly nutritious or new snack items.
- ***New Food –*** When a child discovers a new food they enjoy, take a photo of the child with the food and ask the child to describe why they enjoy the food; such as, taste, texture, and smell.
    - **Family Prompt –** Encourage families to make the food at home and explore the food in recipes with their child.

STANDARD: GROSS MOTOR

Gross Motor Development

- ***Head Shoulders Knees and Toes*** - Sing "Head Shoulders Knees and Toes." Encourage children to demonstrate different parts of the song. Send a group message of the class singing together.
- ***Gym Class and Playground Experiences -*** Children can send messages of new games learned in gym class or new activities or accomplishments on the playground. If a child masters riding a trike, the teacher could take the picture and allow the child to record the message declaring their achievement.
- ***Active Outdoors*** - Take pictures of children participating in outdoor activities such as monkey bars, etc. Practice using the correct verb vocabulary to describe the activity, and have the children describe their physical accomplishments. "I hung on the monkey bars for 10 seconds. I climbed 6 rungs on the ladder. I completed the obstacle course in 1 minute. I caught the ball 4 times in a row."

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STANDARD: FINE MOTOR

Fine Motor Development

- ***Grip* -** The teacher could send a picture demonstrating the child's achievement of a correct grip when writing or drawing. If the child needs additional support with fine motor development, the teacher could also send a message showing how to help the child.

CONTENT AREA:
APPROACHES TO LEARNING

STANDARD: INITIATIVE AND CURIOSITY

Interest in varied topics and experiences, desire to learn, creativeness, and independence in learning

- ***Question of the Day*** - Have a specific question of the day for children to report to families. For example, have each child take a photo of a caregiver and ask his / her favorite color to report to families.
- ***Mystery Box*** - Bring in a box. Children can hide an object in the box and send a message giving their family clues (3) about the object.
  - **Family Prompt -** The family member can guess what is in the box.
- ***Block Center*** - Ask the children to send messages explaining their block buildings.
- ***Dramatic Play*** - Children can send messages of their dramatic play experiences.
  - **Family Prompt -** Who played with you? What are you pretending?
- ***Playdough*** - Children can send messages explaining their playdough creations.

STANDARD: PERSISTENCE AND ATTENTIVENESS

Engagement in activities with persistence and attention

*Any activity using Message from Me will meet this standard***.**

- ***Puzzles*** – When a child completes a puzzle, encourage them to take a photo of it and send to a family member.

STANDARD: COOPERATION

Interest and engagement in group experiences

- ***Board Games* -** Children can send pictures of board games used in the classroom with a message of who played the game together.
  - **Family Prompt** - The family member can ask the child how to play the game.
- ***Daily Routine* -** Have children take a picture of your posted daily schedule and send it as a message.
  - **Family Prompt -** Encourage families to ask children about the day. For example: What do you do first in the day? What do you do next, etc. What is your favorite part of the schedule? What do you like the least? Why?
- ***Story Sequence*** - Give the children a set of story cards to sequence. Have the children put the cards in the proper order then take a picture and tell the story based on the cards. The children could also omit the last card and have the family guess what happens next.

Message from Me Educator's Guide

Special thanks to the following lead authors and collaborating child care centers in the development of the Message from Me Educator's Guide.

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