

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Willow Oaks Kindergarten students just finished up a terrific science unit with teachers from the Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo. You can help solidify your child's learning, and foster a life-long love of science at the same time. Simply ask your child to talk about it! Use the class descriptions below, as well as our suggested questions and web links to guide your discussions, and have fun learning together!

Unit Title: Science Sampler

This unit was designed to introduce your child to a variety of different science concepts, including *the five senses, magnets, rocks, the Water Cycle, construction, center of gravity, and chemistry*. During the lesson about rocks, students got to examine some special rocks from the JMZ collection.

Questions

Senses:

What are your five senses? How do you use them to learn about your world? If the lights go out in your house and you're stuck in the dark, what other senses can help you get around safely?

Magnets:

Find a magnet to experiment with. What surfaces does the magnet stick to? What surfaces doesn't it stick to? What causes a magnet to stick to certain surfaces?

Rocks:

What are rocks? Where do they come from? Visit your yard or a local park. How many different types of rocks can you find?

The Water Cycle:

What is the water cycle? Where does rain come from? What do you think will happen to a glass of water if we let it sit for a few days?

Construction:

If you could build your own playhouse, what materials would you use? Why? Let children be as silly and creative as possible when designing their playhouses!

Center of Gravity:

What helps people and things balance? What games and sports can you think of that require skill with balancing?

Chemistry

Be chemists together. Experiment by mixing different cooking ingredients together. Notice what happens. Bake some cookies together. How is baking like chemistry?

Web Links:

<http://pbskids.org/clifford/games/hide-and-seeK-game.html>

http://ksnn.larc.nasa.gov/k2/s_magnetsWork_v.html

<http://www.learner.org/interactives/rockcycle/types2.html>

<http://www.science-house.org/CO2/activities/polymer/oobleck.html>

The Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo (JMZ), located at 1451 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto, is a small children's museum with educational exhibits and live animals. Daily admission to the Museum is free, and they also offer many science classes for families and schools. Each year, JMZ science teachers teach approximately 180 classes in Willow Oaks Elementary School (provided at no cost). Lessons include close encounters with live animals or authentic artifacts, hands-on exploration of science concepts, and work with real scientific tools and equipment. We encourage you to take advantage of this important learning resource by visiting the JMZ often with your child.

Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Willow Oaks Elementary School
Kindergarten Teachers