



Family Child Care Utilizes STEM in Teaching

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE FAMILY CHILD CARE

During Month of the Military Child, 13 Family Child Care providers participated in Weekly STEM Challenges at Minot Air Force Base, N.D. Each provider was given three “mystery” items and asked to create an activity that was judged in three areas: innovation, relevance to weekly lesson plan, and inclusion of learning domains (social and emotional development, physical development, mathematics and reasoning, social studies, creative development, language and literacy development, and science).

Throughout April, the following three mystery items were placed in a large colorful box on each FCC doorstep each Monday morning: (week 1) purple foam sheets, paper plates, and sticky notes/post-its; (week 2) purple masking tape, purple paper, foam stickers; (week 3) purple pom-poms, purple pipe cleaners, and metallic star stickers; (week 4) purple yarn, paper cups, and rubber bands. The challenge began every Monday at 10 a.m. and ended on Friday at 10 a.m. The Family Child Care Coordinator, Alyssa Kelly, assembled and delivered each box and its contents, and the Flight Chief and School Liaison

Officer judged each activity. The four weekly winners were announced on Wednesday, May 12, 2021 at the Monthly Provider Meeting:

Week 1: Regina Corona Earthquake Sustainability Homes

Social Emotional Development: After the children build their house, they have to see if it will sustain an earthquake by shaking the plate. Emotions come to play when their house does not stay intact. I then explain to the children that it happens to people around the world who suffer from an earthquake. I let them know that when it happens to other people they pick up the pieces and rebuild their home.

Physical Development: Children will use their fine motor skills to cut each piece and put them together. Each tab will be inserted into each hole in correlation with the letter on the tab and by the hole.

Mathematics and reasoning: Each child will match the amount of sticky notes to each number labeled on the sides of their house. Each sticky note will act as the windows and doors.

Social Studies: If the house

withstands or does not withstand the earthquake, they are learning that it happens in real life. Even windows and doors may break down and they learn that this is a natural disaster that occurs in real life. They are also coloring the world on the plate.

Creative Development: Children will use the plates to color and draw what they perceive the world to look like and what colors they’d like to add.

Language & Literacy Development: Each tab and hole will be labeled A, B, C, D, E, and F They have to match each letter to its corresponding hole in order to build their house.

Science: Movement of the plate which acts as the world, causing the house to shift, move, and collapse as if it were an earthquake!

Week 2: Kimberly Reeves The Color Train

Our theme of the week is transportation. I made train tracks with the tape. The children had to match the sticker colors to the color wagons. Afterwards, they played with the train on the tracks. They decided together which sticker goes on which wagon. It helped with fine motor

skills (peeling off the paper on the back of the stickers), team work, color recognition and imaginary play.

Week 3: Lacey Ranucci Fishing Poles

Children will learn to form lines out of pipe cleaners and pompoms in this activity, as well as work on making patterns with them. They learned to sort the items as well and recognize differences. This week we are learning about the letter “L,” so we find objects and listen for sounds that start with the letter, which is why we used lines in our activity and everyday learning. What do we do before we go upstairs and downstairs? “We line up.” When we go to the park what are we supposed to do? “Line up, hold hands, and stay by Ms. Ranucci.”

Week 4: Cassidy Larson Cup Phones

We made phones with our cups and strings! We put the rubber bands over the cups before we painted so when we took them off the cups we could see lines.

Each weekly winner received a purple apron with pockets to use inside their homes for any creative activity they dream up (as well as extra weekly challenge

supplies), and all 13 participants received a bracelet with the word “Mindfulness.”

Regarding the STEM Challenges, Family Child Care Coordinator, Alyssa Kelly, proudly stated, “Minot AFB has an exemplary group of talented FCC Providers who teach remarkable, creative lessons on a daily basis. However, only coordinators and parents notice these lessons, as most teaching occurs within each FCC home rather than in a group setting, such as is the case at the Child Development Center or Youth Center. With these challenges, the teachers had the opportunity to showcase their skills and aptitude while having fun and connecting with these beautiful, resilient military children!”

When asked if next year’s Month of the Military Child will have the same STEM Challenges, Kelly said, “We’ll see! It’s a mystery....” She added, “I am so grateful for the opportunity to highlight these amazing teachers on our base and if given the chance to do this again—maybe not exactly like these STEM challenges—I will, certainly, do it!”

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