



Somerville Early Educations (SEE)

Morning Meeting: A Guide for Teachers



Welcome to SEE Every Child

Our Mission and Vision

Mission: The Somerville Early Education department ensures that young children in Somerville have equitable access to a curriculum approach where they are engaged in joyful, robust, challenging, child-centered experiences grounded in play, discovery, and their own interests, and guided by state and national learning standards.

Vision: Children are born ready to learn and have the right to equitable access to a curricular approach that reflects who they are and what they are interested in. It is the job of the adults in a child's life to prepare an environment and experiences that support a child's ability to grow to their full potential. In order for children to be confident and happy learners in school and life, the adult, environment, and child work together.

Roots of SEE Every Child

This curriculum builds on both current research and established theories[i] about how young children learn. SEE Every Child is...

Centered on the whole child. Research shows that for young children to grow and thrive, teachers need to think of them as whole beings, focusing on social and emotional development to help children build emotional awareness, skills for social interaction, and empathy for others.

Anti-bias focused. Anti-bias goals are integrated into each thematic project and all learning experiences are designed to be flexible and have multiple entry points, so that children with special needs, multilingual learners, and children developing at their own paces all have meaningful ways to engage with the curriculum.

Learning through play. Influenced by the Montessori and Reggio Emilia approaches, children have extended time daily to engage in purposeful, guided play, leading their own learning through active engagement with materials in a prepared environment, with mentoring and support from thoughtful teachers.

Thematic and interdisciplinary. Children understand the world through active exploration, constructing knowledge as they investigate, asking questions, and interacting with people and materials. SEE Every Child is organized around thematic projects that offer opportunities for children to explore concepts and build skills across content areas while investigating topics that matter most to them.

Flexible and adjustable. SEE Every Child is designed with flexibility to be culturally responsive to the children in your class. While each class will take unique paths in the curriculum, cultivating unity and collaboration across our city's many vibrant ECE programs can make children's experiences stronger.

Responsive and co-constructed. Educators have been a part of developing this curriculum from the start, sharing their ideas and visions, generating suggestions for curriculum topics, and giving feedback on draft materials. Educators adapt the curriculum based on the funds of knowledge of children and families.

Classroom Environments and Intentional Teaching

The classroom environment can be referred to as a "third teacher;" (alongside parents and educators) where the environment guides children to make choices, to engage with materials, ideas, and each other, and to behave in certain ways (Gandini, 1998). Preparing environments for learning involves intentional teaching. An intention is a purposeful aim, plan, or provocation that guides teachers' productive action in the classroom. SEE Every Child is grounded in the Four Intentions (Kuh & Ponte, 2021), directly related to practices that all teachers can carry out daily as they work with children and develop purposeful curriculum. The Four Intentions complement each other and when used together, allow a rich curriculum to emerge:

Compelling Materials

Explicit Presentation

Responsive Scaffolding

Following Children's Interests

Key Practices and Routines

While each program will have a unique schedule to fit their context, certain key practices and routines are implemented across programs to allow children a variety of opportunities to learn and explore.

One key practice in SEE Every Child is engaging in thematic project-based learning, guided by Big Ideas. Each month, teachers choose from among several projects, outlined in the Big Idea Guides available on the website. Exploring topics through Big Ideas allow children to develop deeper understanding and to make meaningful connections between learning and their lives. Different times of day act as entry points for children to access curriculum through the project approach and Big Ideas.

Some of these entry points offered by SEE Every Child include:

Meetings Throughout the Day

Choice Time

Small Group Times

Whole Group Experiences

Outdoor Time

Mealtimes

SEE's routines and teaching practices are designed to be flexible. Educators incorporate them into their daily schedules as appropriate to their learners and the structure of their program.

Learning Opportunities in All Domains

Within the daily routines and practices outlined above, children are engaging in integrated learning across all domains. Projects, guided by Big Ideas, connect and integrate the learning. These domains consist of:

- **Social Emotional Learning.** SEE Every Child uses the *Second Step Early Learning* program (*Second Step*, n.d.) which encourages children to explore social emotional skills through storytelling, songs, games and group activities.
- **Balanced Literacy.** SEE Every Child's Literacy component was designed with researchers from the Lectio group (Lectio Group, n.d.) and includes evidence-based practices to help children become strong emergent readers, writers and communicators.
- **Mathematical Thinking.** Based on the *Building Blocks Pre-K* curriculum (Clements & Sarama, 2013), SEE embraces math as a language through which children can better communicate and understand their experiences.
- **Science and Engineering.** SEE Every Child aligns with *Next Generation Science Standards* (NGSS Lead States, 2013) and allows children to investigate the world around them through hands-on, play-based exploration.
- **Artistic Expression.** SEE Every Child encourages making connections to Big Ideas through artistic expression in order to allow children to explore artistic media and to communicate their ideas creatively.
- **Physical Development.** SEE Every Child's dedication to educating the whole child means mindful incorporation of physical development. Children spend regular time outdoors, as well as play games and participate in activities that allow for movement and that make connections to Big Ideas in new ways.

Woven throughout SEE's curriculum is an emphasis on Anti-Bias Education (Derman-Sparks, Edwards, & Goins, 2020), which is integrated into projects and Big Ideas in order to promote positive self-image, empathy for others and an understanding of fairness. Anti-bias education is centered on 4 main goals for children: **Identity, Diversity, Justice and Action.** Through incorporation of these concepts, children are encouraged to be confident, understanding and compassionate, as well as develop their ability to identify injustices and use their voice to work towards fairness for themselves and others.

We hope you enjoy working with SEE Every Child. Feedback is welcome on our website.

[i] For a full reference list and additional research that underpins the SEE Every Child approach, please see the full Preschool Curriculum Guidelines on the SEE website.

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Introduction

Morning Meeting is an essential tool to support classroom community building and our social emotional learning goals for children. Morning meeting provides a structured space where we can connect with each other in an inviting and meaningful way. Intentionally planning for Morning Meeting sets a tone of welcoming, care, equity, respect and trust - providing time to include each child, model and practice appropriate behaviors and classroom expectations, and the use and care of materials.

Morning Meeting is structured into four key components:

- greeting
- sharing
- games and learning activities
- and the morning message

While eventually a group may be able to do all four components in one meeting, the **components can be taught and experienced at meetings over the course of a day**. The predictable format of Morning Meeting and the components provides structure and comfort.

Getting Started with Morning Meeting in Pre-K

Being in a Group

1. Consider the space and set-up for Morning Meeting. Gather in a circle, or on the edge of the rug, with all children and teachers able to see one another's faces.
2. Teach children how to transition to the rug (pushing in chairs, walking feet), sit appropriately, use signals (quiet signals, same-same, etc), and other routine practices. Provide explicit presentations for each behavioral component and routine.



Using name cards helps children find their seat.



Ring a chime to mark the beginning of a meeting.

Getting Started

Introducing Morning Meeting can begin **on the first day of school** by:

- Welcoming your group and teaching a simple greeting
- Presenting an explicit presentation about how to sit on the rug.

Phase in components, one at a time, taking the time to teach, model and practice each skill. As children become proficient and confident with a meeting component, teach and add the next component. Spend the first few weeks practicing and mastering a daily greeting and providing explicit presentations of classroom expectations and materials.

Morning Meeting Components

1. Greeting

Greeting every child at the beginning of the day provides children with a sense of community and belonging. Children learn one another's names, build connections, and develop caring and welcoming practices. Greeting others and being greeted by others sets a positive tone for the day.

Start with a simple greeting. Initially, the teacher can model greeting others by greeting each child in a simple manner. This may be a name song or a handshake and "good morning." Once children have developed comfort with being greeted by the teacher, explicitly teach the children how to "pass" a greeting from one friend to another, around the circle.

In order for greeting to be successful, teach children to:

- Orient their bodies to face their peer
- Make eye contact
- Say "Good morning, _____," or any other verbal greeting
- Use their peer's name
- Complete the movement (elbow tap, handshake, high five, etc.)



Greeting Trajectory: Working Up to a Reciprocal Greeting

Introduce greetings in a scaffolded order:

1. Teacher greets individual child by name
 - Welcome Song (Second Step)
 - The More We Get Together Song

2. Child says own name
 - Name Song
3. Greet neighbor by passing a greeting
 - Pass a heart shape as you greet person - “I am passing kindness to ____.”
 - Pass a new materials (such as a pattern block) as you say, “Hi _____. We could play with pattern blocks today.”
4. Reciprocating Greeting with neighbor
 - Shaking hands while saying “Good Morning”
 - Greet as many people as you can in one minute (end of yr.)

Repeat new greetings for 2-4 weeks, until children have reached mastery. Then, add new greetings one at a time, occasionally practicing previously introduced greetings. Once your class has developed a repertoire, children can choose the daily greeting. Having a visual chart of the greeting they have mastered supports children in choosing a greeting.

2. Sharing

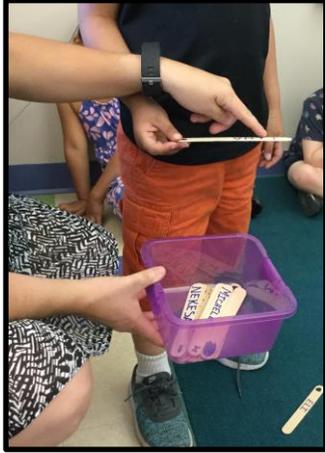
Sharing at Morning Meeting validates children’s life experiences as it supports speaking and listening skills and builds connections and community. Sharing can happen in many ways - from simple ‘stand up - sit down’ games, to opportunities for children to share personal news and stories. There are many Learning Activities that are also Sharing Activities, such as Venn Diagrams.

In order for sharing to be successful, teach children:

- Speaking and audience skills
- The silent connection (same-same) signal
- How to ask respectful questions
- How to make meaningful comments

There are many different equitable ways to have children share - ways that give each child a chance during the course of a week. Most young children cannot sustain listening to more than a few shares at each meeting. Therefore, sharing requires systems to provide and track turns and careful planning to help children become good listeners and appreciate their peers.

- Make a weekly sharing schedule
- Use share sticks (popsicle sticks-put aside when they have a turn)



Pull a small number (3-5) of sharing sticks to answer a prompt.



"Do you like licorice, lollipops, or both?"

Examples of Sharing Opportunities

- One Word Sharing - "Do you like apples or bananas?" "What kind of pizza do you like?"
- Stand Up - Sit Down - "Stand up if you are wearing green."
- Just Like Me! - someone shares something they like, and others say "just like me" if they share that experience or preference.
- SFLC Talk Cards
- Two Stars and a Wish - give feedback on an activity or a piece of student work. Children give two positive statements (stars) and one 'how to make it better' (wish).
- Sharing Work - This is very effective right before choice time or right after choice time.
- Author's Circle - Journal shares
- Sharing Information that is related to the curriculum - "Tell us, who are the members of your family." (during of study on families).
- Open Sharing - Sharing Personal Stories
- Storytelling Story Acting
- See more ideas in "Games and Learning Activities" below.

A Shift from Show and Tell: We do not advise doing "show and tell" of home items such as toys as these can generate property disputes and are often more interesting for the sharer than the audience. Instead use classroom learning and experiences to reinforce content, routines, and build community.

3. Games and Learning Activities

Group Activities help contribute to the group's sense of community by building a repertoire of common songs, games, chants, and experiences. They help children actively engage, and encourage inclusion and participation from everyone. Learning Activities and Games can also be connected to the ongoing curriculum and Big Idea.

In order for Games and Activities to be successful, teach children:

- How to move safely
- How to wait for a turn
- Different voice levels (speaking, chanting, singing)
- What to do if someone makes a mistake



children are at school today? How many are absent?"



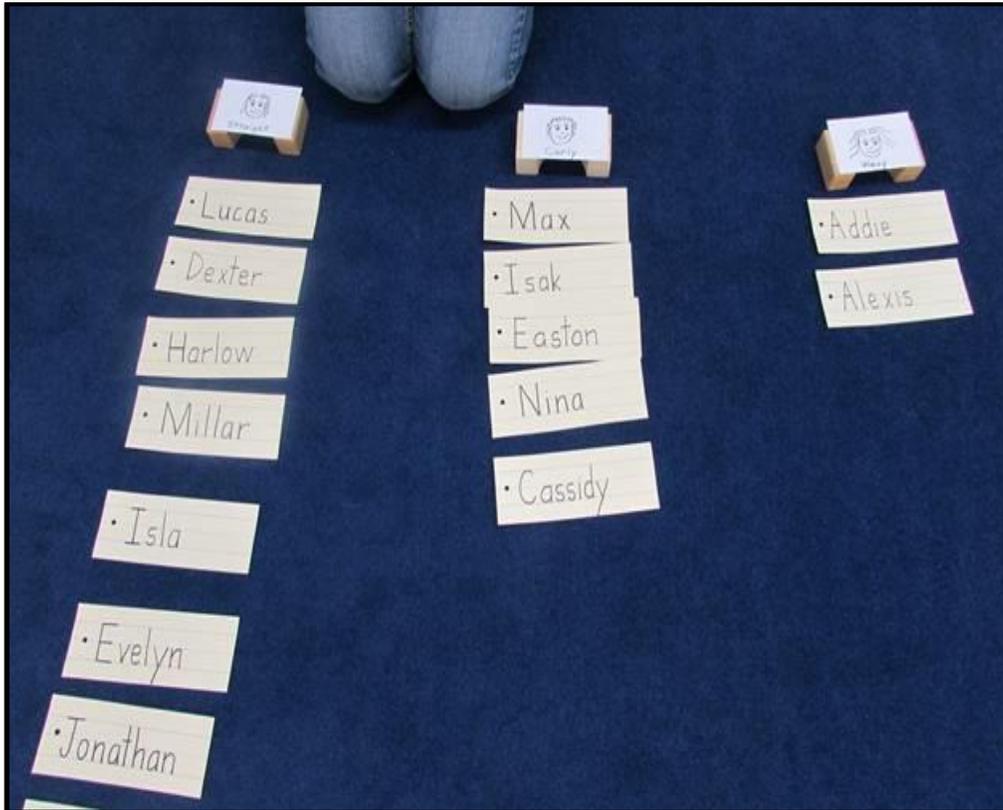
Playing *Where The Wind Blows*.

"How many

Examples of Group Activities

- Develop Classroom Agreements
- Second Step Activities
- Name Games
- Grace and Courtesy Games that support routines and self-regulatory behaviors throughout the day.
 - Carrying and pushing in chairs
 - Snack routines (opening and closing lunch boxes)

- Cubby etiquette: Hanging up coats and backpacks, etc.
- Walking around mats and work
- See the SEE website for more activities www.somervilleearlyed.com
- Songs - name songs, silly songs, songs that align with curriculum
- Movement Activities - “This is a song about Sammie”
- Group Games - Bug in a Rug
- Voting (would you rather A or B. Keep building on and adding more choices.)
- Bar Graphs and Venn Diagrams (families, pets, likes etc...)
- Song and Movement Activities
- Explicit presentations connected to curriculum
- Curriculum Wondering Mapping
- Shared Drawing and Writing - Story of the Day
- KWL charts



“Do you have straight hair? Curly hair? Wavy hair?”

4. The Morning Message

Morning Message helps students connect with the day’s plans and transition into the rest of the day. It builds excitement about the learning that will happen each day, inviting and

preparing children for new experiences. Morning Message builds community through **choral reading and discussion** of shared written information, as it simultaneously reinforces language arts, math and other academic skills in a meaningful and interactive way.

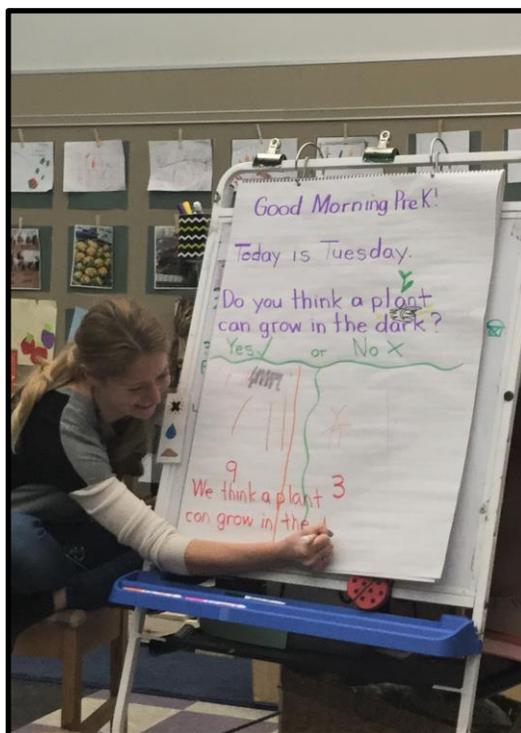
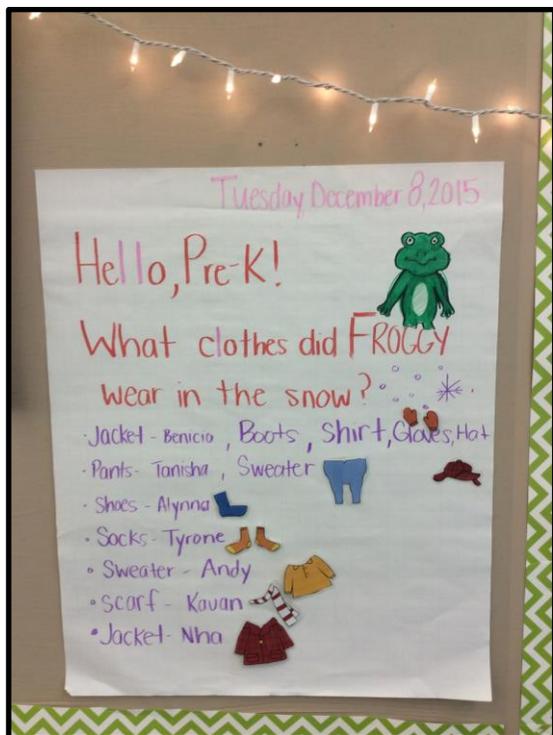
In order for Morning Message to be successful:

- Prepare the message
 - Using repetitive text and language patterns, from day to day.
 - Using 1-3 sentences
 - Using picture cues to support understanding
 - Connecting the message and (questions or prompts) to your BIG IDEA and classroom curriculum

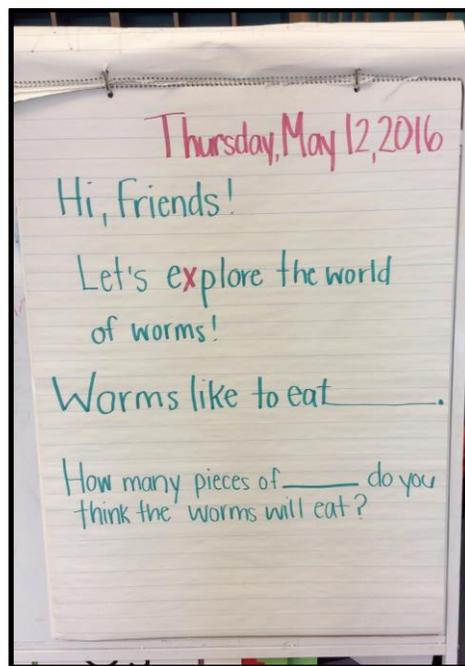
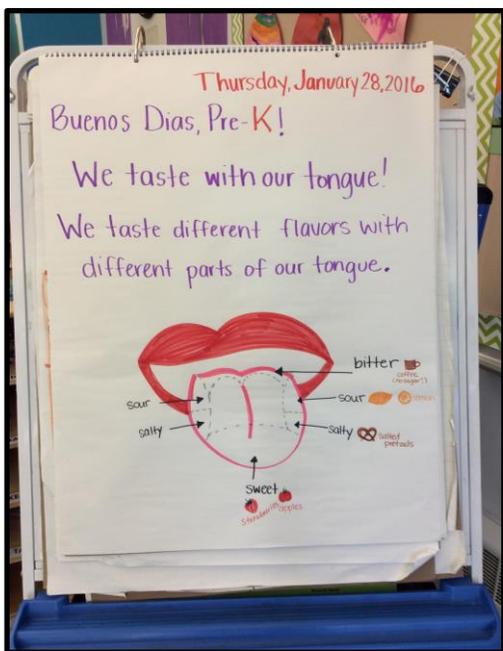
- Initially, read the message out loud to the class, pointing to each word as you read.

- Move to choral reading. First read through the message once. Then invite the group to choral reads with you. (We do not advise asking one child to read the message or fill in components, as this can become a performance and you risk losing the rest of the group.)

- If children enter the classroom on a staggered schedule, or have first-thing-in-the-morning jobs, a marking or writing task can be added to the morning message.

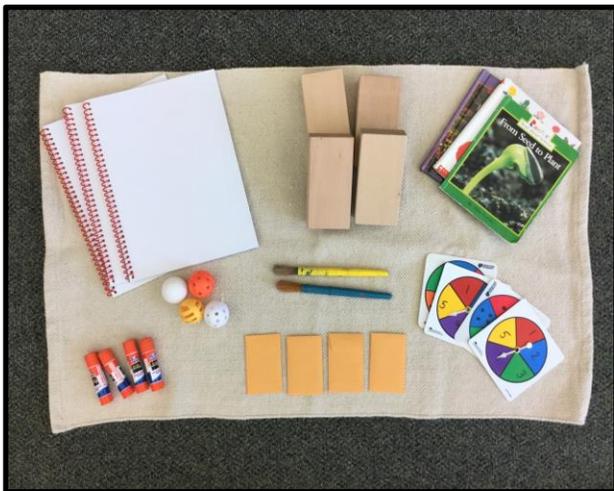


Morning Message can do more than give information about the day. A message may have a question or a prompt that solicits a response. If this is the case, the message may become the catalyst for the Learning Activity, and should be read prior to the Learning Activity. Morning Message can also connect to content and integrate many areas of the curriculum - math, science, social studies, and play.



Other Possible Components

- Explicit Presentations - See the SEE website www.somervilleearlyed.com
- Explicit Presentations are the practice of intentionally naming materials and actions, and demonstrating the proper care and use of a material or activity.
 - Explicit Presentation Can be used to:
 1. **Introduce a new material**-demonstrate the care and properties of the material and how to use it.
 2. **Introduce a specific activity** and its objective. Show process from beginning to end (including clean-up and care).
 3. **Introduce a social norm, expectation, or interaction** (grace and courtesy).
 - There is “no lesson too small” - putting things into a cubby, carrying blocks, interrupting politely, and using a paintbrush all require instruction.
- Showing and Making Choices
Discuss and share the daily choices.
 - Use a Choice Bin and present props for each choice, with the correct amount of objects to represent the number of people that will work in each area



- Use a picture of activities/areas on a choice board and have students put a “ticket” with their picture and name to mark their choice on the board.



- Release from Morning Meeting

After explaining or reminding children what they will do next, dismiss children from the rug in an orderly fashion:

- Integrating phonological games, letters, and curricular information
 - If your name starts with /s/ . . .
 - If you worked at the art area today . . .
 - If you have the letter V in your name . . .
- Releasing children by the areas of their choices
- Using skip counting rounds
 - 1 - 2 - 3 - go! 1 - 2- 3 - go! (every fourth person leaves the rug)

Planning for Morning Meeting

Using a template to plan Morning Meeting helps to connect elements of the meeting to one another and to the big idea of the current curriculum.

Big Idea	
Welcome and Greeting	
Share	
Learning Activity/Explicit Presentation	
Morning Message	

Examples from Different Times of the Year

September

Big Idea	<i>We are a classroom community.</i>
Welcome and Greeting	Listening Song (Second Step) Come into the Circle Song
Share	<i>(not yet, later in the month/year)</i>
Learning Activity	Explicit Presentation of a classroom material
Morning Message	<i>(not yet, later in the month/year)</i>

November

Big Idea	<i>People and families use traditions and rituals to celebrate together.</i>
Greeting	Practice and pass greetings in home languages: "Hola, ____." "Bom dia, ____." "Bonjour, ____." "Ni hao, ____."
Share	Stand up-Sit down - Stand up if you . . (like pizza, have a sister, have black hair, etc.) . . then sit down.
Morning Message	Hello, Today is Monday. We will do a survey today. Do your grandparents live near you?
Learning Activity	Group Survey T Chart - Have children place name cards to answer a survey question. "Do your grandparents live nearby or far away?"

February

Big Idea	<i>People write messages to share feelings and ideas with one another.</i>
Greeting	Practice a reciprocal greeting, while shaking hands. Greeting - "Good Morning, ____." Response - "Good Morning, ____."
Share	Invite children to share personal stories about sending or receiving a letter. Invite peers to share connections and comments.
Morning Message	"Dear Children, Today is Tuesday. We will practice how to write a message. What might you say to a friend in a message?"
Learning Activity/Explicit Presentation	Model writing a message, using a dry erase board template (Dear _____, (space of a message) From, _____.) Have children draw a peers name card and speak a message. Take dictation and writing it into the template. Then read it. After a few rounds, present the word cards (Dear, Love, From, To, etc.) that will be available at the writing center for writing messages.

May

Big Idea	<i>Living Things Grow and Change</i>
Greeting	Greet as many people as you can in 30 seconds by saying "Hi, _____," giving a high five, and waiting for them to say it back.
Share	Share personal stories of something you have learned (grown) to do at school this year. Take questions and comments.
Learning Activity	Sharing Work - Invite children who did observational drawings of the emerging sprouts and plants to show and talk about what they noticed. Take questions and comments, after each child shares.
Morning Message	"Good Morning Kiddos, Today is Thursday. We will talk about how plants grow. What have you noticed about the plants in the Science Center?"

References: *The Morning Meeting Book*, Responsive Classroom, 2016.
Morning Meeting Messages, Responsive Classroom, 2006
99 Activities and Greetings, Responsive Classroom, 2004
Second Step Curriculum