

## Using Posterous in the Classroom

Submitted by Karen Hadwen

Last year I decided that I wanted to increase communication with families by using a classroom blog. I was relatively new at blogging, and so I asked around and checked out different blog sites on the computer to find one that would fit my needs. I finally decided on posterous.

Posterous is very easy to use. You can start an account by either going to posterous.com and signing up, or by emailing [post@posterous.com](mailto:post@posterous.com). When you send the initial email to posterous, it becomes your first blog posting.

Posterous allows you to set up multiple spaces under the same account. The first space you set up must be public, but all other spaces can be either public or private. I did not want to share any information publically, so my first space has no blog postings. I then created a private space called Mrs. Hadwen's Kindergarten Class. Under this space, I added each of my families as a follower. Families were then sent an email that prompted them to open up a posterous account. When I posted a blog entry, families were notified by email, and were able to view the blog and post their own comments.

Once my spaces were set up, I could either go to posterous and post via the web, or I could email the blog post in from the email account that I used to set up the account. Whatever I used for the subject of my email would become the title of the blog post. Any pictures or videos that were attached to the email would automatically become a picture gallery in the post.

I am using posterous for my second year. This year I have really encouraged parents to post their comments so that the students and I can look at them in class. I posted pictures of the students on their first day of kindergarten, interacting and having fun. The parents have really appreciated seeing their children working at school. Knowing that their children are in a safe and happy environment has increased the parent's comfort level and eased the transition to school.

## Communicating With Parents Through Facebook

Submitted by Jill Gendall

Last year, I was working on creating and displaying more documentation in the classroom but was feeling disappointed that parents rarely entered my classroom and so very few people read and celebrated what my students were learning and doing. I also had a goal to communicate with parents digitally, and sought out to find a way to have parents regularly seeing what we are experiencing. I surveyed my parents about which media would be most practical and user-friendly for them (email, blog, facebook, etc).

I found out that all my parents have a facebook account and most of them are on it at least once a day. I wanted to make information as readily available to parents as possible, so I started a facebook page for my Pre-Kindergarten classroom. I created a person called "\_\_\_\_\_ School Pre-Kindergarten", not a group, because then I didn't have to personally be facebook friends with all of my parents. My class only accepted parents as friends, so it was a small, private group. At least twice a week, I posted photos and observations of my students' creations, explorations and discoveries.

The parents loved logging on to facebook and seeing what their child has been up to that day. It was a very effective way to communicate reminders to parents and I always knew who had read it because I asked them to "like" it if they read it. It was also a way to build community among my families; they parents started posting comments on photos and talking about them as they were dropping their kids off. One mom brought a yummy dish to a family day and everyone asked her to post the recipe on the class FB wall. It was a great way to build home/ school communication, as well as give parents something to talk about with their child and each other.