

From teens to tots



As most of you know I generally sub at any grade level I can in the districts I'm signed up for. That could mean anywhere from K-8, though my most comfortable levels are around 3rd-7th and during the less lean times I stick to them for the most part. However, these are not those times and I will pretty much take anything that comes up. 8th grade is actually not uncommon at all for me to take even in the best of times, and neither is 2nd- adding one level to each end of my comfort range. However, pre-kindergarten is pretty rare. Not just for me to take, but just to be offered since it is not one of the required grades. Come to think of it, I don't think kindergarten is required either but it has pretty much become standard since at least the middle of last century to prepare kids for 1st grade. Now of course many, many families take advantage of preschool, so it is no surprise that school districts are picking up on this age bracket as well. I'm not sure just what the requirements are to enroll ones child in public preschool but they are probably simple like "must be able to walk" and "must be toilet trained." In some districts they actually have to be considered special-needs kids to qualify, so toilet trained is not necessarily required for these kinds of kids- I can attest to this as assistants regularly change kids of all ages, usually behind closed doors but there was one classroom where they changed an 8th-grade-aged boy right in the classroom with very little in the way to prevent seeing those parts usually covered up, not that any of the kids would have cared anyway since they were all similarly impaired.

But back to normal kids. Monday I was in an 8th-grade science classroom at the very early district meaning an arrival time of 7:15AM- this coming after I had maybe 4-5 hours of sleep. Fortunately this lack of sleep always hits one the following

day as opposed to the current day, and Tuesday was no exception. The kids had a video to watch about the first 25 years of NASA. They talked about the start of our aeronautics exploration back in 1915 with the inception of NACA ([National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics](#)) though the birth of NASA itself wasn't until 1958, and continued with the US response to Sputnik, the trips which eventually landed us on the moon, and remote exploration of the planets. This was a 60-minute video so I didn't get to see the whole thing, but I suppose it must have ended talking about the three [space shuttles](#) up to that 25-year point in time. There really isn't much to say about the classes themselves- they were six identical classes.

Tuesday I found myself at the opposite end of the scale, but only at the end of the day- I started as an ELL resource (pull-out) teacher for 1st-5th grade. In fact, most of my morning was spend with some kids from the very classroom I subbed in a few weeks ago. We went over some reading, some letter names and sounds, played some games... Pretty enjoyable. I then went to Wendy's (baconator- mmm) to grab some lunch and headed to the other school where I would be in preschool. This was where my lack of sleep two nights before would catch up to me. I really did nothing much in these two classrooms (half an afternoon in each of two preschool classrooms as a floater) except act as an extra set of eyes. I had been in one of the rooms a couple of weeks before during ISAT week and that day they started with putting simple puzzles together but today they would start by doing some coloring. St. Patrick's day pages of course, this bing March 17th and all. There was one little girl who smiled at me with a "you don't see me doing anything wrong" smile the entire way as she headed to the trash, hands behind her back, to throw away here pages because she messed up coloring the first page. Uh-huh- nice try. I fished them out and she had to go back to coloring them. I guess I *did* get to do something- I got to read a book about some kids trying to catch a leprechaun for his you-know-what. I tried to give it a bit o' an Irish lilt as I read the

leprechaun's lines, and other parts of the story. During their centers time I had to gulp down the rest of my caffeinated water as apparently the caffeine from the Dr. Pepper I had for lunch was very weak and I was in danger of collapsing on a chair. But I made it. They were in their centers for an hour before I went to the other room which then finished up their own centers- both rooms have pretty much the same routine, did some singing and listened to another story (read by someone else in the room regrettably), packed up, and went outside to play until their buses arrived.

So how was today? Maybe I'll tell later. Another LD classroom, self-contained, 5th and 6th grades.