Activities

An Exciting New Year
While children look back on last year, they'll plan ahead for this year!

Grades: PreK–K, 1–2

Overview
Kids think back over the last year to share the most memorable times, show photos, make a This Year/Last Year chart showing what they expect in the year to come.

Leo the Late Bloomer
By Robert Kraus

The Relatives Came
By Cynthia Rylant
**Materials:**
- photographs of children from the previous year (vacation photos, class photos, and so on)
- chart paper and markers and tape
- Leo the Latebloomer game board (attachment)

**In Advance:** Send a note home to families requesting copies of photos of children from the last year. Ask parents to write a few words on the back of each photo describing the occasion and date it was taken.

**ACTIVITIES**
- **Ask children to talk about their experiences from the previous year.** Who were their friends? What did they learn?
- **Invite children to share their photographs.** Where were they when the pictures were taken? What were they doing? Ask specific questions to help children compare last year with this year, using children's comments and parents' written descriptions to help you: "Josh, you said on your last birthday you had a cake that looked like a fire truck. What do you want your cake to look like on your next birthday?" "Bonnie, last year you went on a class trip to the zoo. Where would you like to go this year?"
- **Create a "This Year/Last Year" experience chart to record children's answers.** Label children's photos and attach them alongside the related statements.
- **Continue talking with children about their expectations for the year.** Are there things they are particularly looking forward to? Things they are especially concerned or nervous about? Encourage them to speak openly so they understand that your room is a place where they can freely express their feelings.
- **Keep the "This Year/Last Year" chart on display for the entire year.** Refer to it throughout the year to spark discussions on how children are changing: "Lee, last year you said you enjoyed the reading corner best. This year, your favorite is the sand table."
Linked Activities: Science
Plants Change Too. Have children help to make a cutting from a geranium. Place the cutting in a clear container of water and observe how, over time, roots form. Transplant the geranium into a flowerpot with potting soil. Encourage children to observe changes in the plant and to help care for it. Make sure the class geranium has a "special place" in your room and is tended throughout the year. Encourage children to describe the changes they see occurring in the plant as the year progresses.

Subjects:
Time, Life Cycle, Feelings
Help me find Leo!

Start here.

Read pages 1–3. How do you think Leo feels about himself?

Read pages 4–7. What were some of the things Leo could not do?

Read pages 8–11. Why was Leo’s father worried? Was his mother worried? Why or why not?

Read pages 12–15. What did Leo’s mother mean when she said, “A watched bloomer doesn’t bloom?”

Read pages 16–19. Which seasons passed by on these pages? How can you tell?

Look, Dad! I’ve bloomed!

Read pages 20–21. What happened to Leo? What does it mean to “bloom”?

Read the rest of the story. What was Leo able to do once he bloomed?