

December 2017 Parent Note

Mrs. Comeau's Kindergarten

Hello all,

I hope you all had an enjoyable Thanksgiving with family and friends.

***Theme:** We will be centering our focus this month about *Caring*. (my thought process is to steer away from the "I want" mentality of the holidays to a more giving outlook) We will engage in several activities about how we care for our families, our friends and even strangers this month. We will also talk about the special ways that our family's celebrate the holiday. I have enclosed a family tradition paper for each child to fill out with you and return to school. Please discuss your traditions this month with your child, write your child's thoughts and let them draw their own picture of this fun time of year. We will be putting them into a class book. We will also investigate holiday traditions in other countries and compare them with our own. Our emphasis will be on sharing and respecting each other's beliefs and family traditions.

We will be spending a lot of time talking about friendship. We will talk about different ways to get along with each other, and will create some rules for our own "peace table". We also will be making a special gift for a secret pal in class.

Finally, we will be talking about caring for others during the holidays. In our room, we will be making special cans to collect soda can tabs. I will be turning them in to the Shriners Hospitals for Children. The tabs are recycled and the proceeds are used for medical and non-medical equipment for children. (for more information, http://www.shrinershq.org/Hospitals/Springfield/Aluminum_Tab_Collection.aspx. The point is that we are reaching out to help other children in need. (I have past students/parents/grandparents that stay in touch and *still* bring tabs in!)

***Language Arts, Phonics and Math:** We will be using several different books and poems during our shared and read aloud book times this month. Some of them are: The Giving Tree, This is my Family, Land of Many Colors, The Giving Tree, Grandmother's Latkes, Will you be my Friend?, "Home", "Families" and "December Chicken Soup and Rice". The children have been diligent in using their good reading habits that we have learned in our shared and read aloud book lessons. We read independently at least once a day from our classroom library or our personal book boxes. I am thrilled at their use of appropriate book handling skills, and use of pictures clues and word attack skills that they are using to help them read. We will be starting to send home our book bags this month, so your little Kindergartners can show you what read readers they are. Please allow your child to read to you over the weekend, then, sign their form and return the whole bag on Monday. A new bag will come home on Friday. Great job!

Our Phonics lessons will be concluding reading/writing lower case letters and their sounds. We will be moving onto upper case letters and reinforcement of letter sounds. Our phonemic awareness program (playing with sounds) continues to have us practice such skills as: rhyming, identifying beginning/ending sounds, syllables, stretching/ blending sounds to hear words, and punctuation. All these skills will help us become better readers. In reader's workshop, we will be focusing on using strategies to help us figure out tricky words. (I.e. looking at the picture, getting our mouth ready, look for chunks, etc)

In writer's workshop, we will be focusing on writing sentences!!! We know the 3 rules of a sentence (first letter upper case, spaces between words and ending punctuation). We are all using our sight words and we know to write down any sound we hear when sounding out our words. We call this inventive spelling. (phonetic spelling). It is very appropriate for this age and encourages our students to express themselves freely. Conventional spelling will come, as they learn English spelling patterns. Have no fear!

(FYI...I have instituted an new chart for the children that looks at student's written/drawn work,. The chart has 4 icons...BAM!, Thumbs up, so-so and yucky. As a group, we have looked at the examples of work and discussed why they are rated as such. I have found that since we have repeatedly looked at/talked about these concepts, the better quality work the children are producing!. Your children, being the creative thinkers that they are, have even decided that we need stickers with the icons on them, so we can "grade" our papers. One little star even suggested that we could also use them to rate ourselves during independent reading time, to show the qualities of a high class reader! WOW!!!)

The children are doing a wonderful job during our center time. These centers are set up to give additional practice on literacy skills, such as; letter/sound identification, correct formation of words, retelling stories using story blocks or puppets, improving our auditory focusing skills at the listening center, reading big books to a partner, etc. The idea is that the skills are taught, and modeled and then, the children practice them, independently. The children are doing a wonderful job during our center time. These centers are set up to give additional practice on literacy skills, such as; letter/sound identification, correct formation of words, retelling stories using story blocks or puppets, improving our auditory focusing skills at the listening center, reading big books to a partner, etc. The idea is that the skills are taught, and modeled and then, the children practice them, independently.