

Greetings and salutations,

We have many exciting learning adventures in store for your child this month.

Unit: Our social studies unit this month will revolve around the lives and customs of our local Native American, the Wampanoag Indians. We will also learning about the Pilgrims and their early life here in America after their long journey on the Mayflower. We will use stories, poems, and interactive models of early settlements and, with a "real life" pilgrim homestead in the dress-up area. Some of the literature that we will be using will be People of the Breaking Dawn, 'Twas the Night before Thanksgiving, People of the Nations, My Voyage on the Mayflower, Sarah Morton's Day and several Indian legends.

Phonemic Awareness and Phonics: We spend a great deal of time in the beginning of the school year building the foundations for future reading and writing. Throughout our day we play with sounds (rhyming, sounds in different parts of words, adding or deleting sounds, etc), and practice identifying letters and solidifying our knowledge of their respective sounds in words. This foundational building is practiced in a variety of ways....writing letters in different mediums, drawing and "writing" in our journals and on projects, playing board games, engaging in some competitions: "Cute kids" against their "crazy teacher", participating in partner games that not only strengthen their skills but build teamwork, etc. You can help reinforce this learning at home as well.

On our pathway to becoming great readers, we have explored the idea of using the pictures in books to help us predict what is going on or what may happen as we get into the story. We often take "picture walks" to help familiarize ourselves with the essence of a story. We are currently exploring the idea of schema, or background knowledge. We are exploring the idea that our schema helps us make predictions and connections with stories. It also gets expanded when we ask questions about books. We will be asking many, many "I wonder" types of questions over the next few weeks.

Another concept that has come out of our shared reading and our morning message are sight words, or popcorn words (they keep popping up). These are words that you and I automatically read, i.e. "the". For an emerging reader, this concept takes time to develop. In our room, we have incorporated a chant, complete with actions, to help the children internalize the words. We do look a bit silly, but trust me, they get it. Before the end of the school year, the chant disappears and they can automatically read this type of word. It's a snap!! I sent a note home in your open house packet, detailing our sight words for this term and the order of the letters/sounds that we are studying. Your support from home, can only help strengthen your child's skills.

Writing: Our written efforts have progressed from adding details to our drawings to adding labels. As we gain proficiency in our letter-sound skills, our writing also improves. The students are encouraged to write the sounds they hear. We call this "kid writing" or "phonetic spelling". Our purpose is to encourage creative freedom, to empower them to be writers. As their skills grow, so does their understanding of how the English language works. This is a process but they all get there!

ELA: As we begin our thanksgiving unit for social studies, we will beginning to learn how to be a team of researchers. We will be listening to various informational text and together, we'll be pulling out the main idea and some supporting facts. We will try our hands at composing "notes." These notes will be on graphic organizers in the form of pictures with labels, which is very developmentally appropriate for our age. The key word here is "together". We will be learning these skills as a group, together, with lots of discussions and modeling.

Math: Our enVisions 2 math studies continue to focus on counting, comparing, and number recognition this month. We will also be engaging in correct number formation, sorting/comparisons, use of balance scales and oral number stories.

Boastful Turkey: I would like to deepen the bridge between home and school, with a little activity I call, the Boastful Turkey. We compliment your children all the time, expounding on their accomplishments whether they maybe mastering a difficult letter formation, reading a short vowel word or using their words like a growing-up Kindergartner in times of social difficulty. We would like to know what wonderful things your children do at home as well. I have attached 2 turkey feathers. Following the attached directions, please write 2 activities or traits that your wonderful children have shown at home. If possible, have them color the feather and cut them out. Send them back to school as soon as possible. Thanks.

Conferences: I am looking forward to seeing you all on Nov 8 or 19 for conferences. (a sign up letter will be sent home soon) Please remember, I can also be reached at anytime between 7:30-4:30, via phone or email, if you need to speak to me.

Future project: I would like to set up a "toy store" during the month of December. If you are like me, you clean out your kiddos old toys in preparation for the new gifts from Santa. If you would like to donate them to our store, that would be great. We will be busy making signs, shopping flyers, pricing tags for our toy store items. At the end of December, I will donate the toys to a local shelter or Salvation Army. Thanks in advance.

Supplies we could use: If you can help us, that would be great.
Model Magic clay or self hardening clay
Small metal coffee cans
White board markers
Scotch tape

Dates to remember:

Nov 8-9 parent teacher conferences Nov. 10 Veteran's Day- no school Thanksgiving recess Nov. 22-4 No school