

Welcome to Kindergarten!

2016-2017

This is a letter that will help you throughout the year. In Kindergarten, we use the Saxon phonics program which introduces one letter a week. We do not go in alphabetical order; we use the Saxon phonics program order. For example, the first letter that we will work with is the letter I. Saxon's purpose is to provide children with the necessary tools to be a successful independent readers. The aim is to teach kindergartners to recognize and know the primary sounds of the alphabet. This program also teaches the very basics of fluency. Fluency is the ability to read quickly, accurately, and expressively. Fluent readers can recognize words automatically which enables them to concentrate on the meaning of the text. In conjunction with Saxon's letter of the week, we will do Show-n-tell on Friday's. Students are asked to bring in one item that reflects the letter that we are studying. The letter will be marked on the behavior sheet so you will be able to help your child find one item.

Additionally, we are incorporating a program called Handwriting without Tears this year. This program is a research based program that teaches handwriting using multi-sensory tools and developmentally appropriate strategies. Handwriting without Tears teaches children the mechanics so that they are ultimately able to focus on content. We will teach this concept following three basic principles:

1. Simply Smart Student Materials
2. Active Teaching
3. Teacher support

Further, in order for our school to develop a common, targeted focus and accept a shared accountability for a school-wide writing performance, we have adopted Write from the Beginning. This is a developmental, vertically aligned writing program. This program gives us the skills necessary for age appropriate writing instruction and achievement. We will use modeled writing, improvement rubrics, and focused mini-lessons. Students establish a solid foundation in the writing process and excellent writing proficiency becomes the expectation. In Kinder we begin as an emergent writer and we will use pre-writing strategies such as brainstorming, drawing, verbalizing, and thinking maps. Thinking maps are eight visual patterns that are each based on a fundamental thinking process.

For Language Arts we use the program Reading Street. This program focuses on oral reading, phonemic awareness, phonics, differentiated instruction, academic vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing. Each area has a different set of skills that will be taught through this program. For example:

1. Oral language- Concept talk and Anchored Talk
Concept talk: question of the week
Anchored Talk: build on new knowledge that we learned during our concept talk
2. Phonemic Awareness: Target sound throughout the week
3. Phonics: alphabetic knowledge, blend words, and high frequency words.
4. Differentiated Instruction: program allows for children to receive intensive instruction and more practice of critical skills and more opportunity to respond for all learning abilities
5. Academic vocabulary: Learn academic vocabulary words that are directly related to the week's lesson.
6. Fluency: Children engage in oral reading in small groups to practice fluency
7. Comprehension: children recall facts from a previously read story.
8. Writing: Practice writing activities. We also learn writing conventions such as; spelling, grammar, etc.

For Math, we use a program called Early Learning in Mathematics. This program is designed to develop essential foundational knowledge and conceptual understanding. Three components provide the conceptual framework for the math curriculum: the use of mathematical models; mathematics-related vocabulary and discourse; and procedural fluency and automaticity. It requires your child to count, identify and write numbers to 100. We work with numbers and counting everyday using the calendar and activities with Math manipulatives so we do expect that your child will achieve this goal. Our plan is to have your child count and write to 50 by Christmas, 75 by spring break and 100 by the end of the year.

Your child will bring home a behavior sheet each day. Subject matter, activities and suggested homework is outlined on the back. The behavior sheet is also a great communication tool about your child's day, extra school activities or information that you need to share with us.

Please check your child's work every night as they may have a new sight word that we have introduced that day in class. In addition, there are practice words on the Saxon worksheets that we complete in class. Our suggestion is to make a flash card for these words and build a word bank at home for your child to practice reading. Homework should be about 30 minutes each night. If there is not an assigned paper for homework, then please have your child use this time to practice writing letters, writing their name, writing numbers, identifying sounds, etc.

Furthermore, please check RenWeb as we will post additional sight words, homework, and our day to day activities.

The first prayer to memorize is the Our Father. We will test your child on The Our Father prayer the week of October 3rd.

Each week a "Student of the Week" will be assigned. A note will go home to inform you of your child's turn. You and your child can put together a poster that tells some things about them. Suggestions: favorite foods, colors, activities, vacations, etc. You may include pictures of family, friends and vacations. Please use a regular size poster. We will also conduct birthday parties in class that only include the students. To celebrate their birthday, your child may bring something to share with the class such as pencils, bookmarks, stickers, etc. Please, absolutely no food or candy due to allergies and please try to make everything the same. There will also be a party at Christmas and Halloween that is coordinated by the Room Moms. You must complete the Safe Environment program to volunteer.

We eat lunch in the cafeteria at 10:50am. Please do not load your child up with too much food at lunch as we only have 20 minutes to eat. No carbonated beverages are allowed for lunch. Also, we have snack time in the afternoon. Our suggestions for snack include raisins, cereal, crackers, fruit, etc. Please do not send peanuts, candy or drinks. There is a water fountain in each class that your child can access any time. Please make sure that all clothing, shoes and especially sweaters and coats are labeled.

If someone other than your self is picking up your child, you must send a note or an e-mail specifying who will be picking up your child. There are no exceptions to this rule. If you already have a designated carpool, we would like a copy for our files. Please put a readable sign with your child's name in your front car window so we can quickly identify your vehicle. We request that you continue to do this for the whole year.

We are looking forward to a wonderful year in Kindergarten. We are very excited and thankful to work with your child!

Kindergarten Team:

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