

December 2nd, 2008

Dear Parents,

My thanks to all of you who attended the parent conferences last month. The children work hard every minute of the day, and I am continually amazed by their willingness to “give their all.” Thank you for supporting their endeavors!

Literacy instruction is progressing nicely with continued emphasis on letter and sound recognition. The books we read together are assisting with letter recognition, but we also focus on picture clues, rhyming words and context clues to figure out an unknown word. A context clue is simply thinking of a word that “fits right in” and then checking to see if the beginning consonant sound matches. Try it at home when you are working with the Book Baggies this month. Daily Journal Writing is an important event in the classroom. It is not taken lightly by the children, and we have many discussions on “how good writers write.” Our 6+1 traits of writing continues with Ideas, and will expand to include Organization, and Sentence Fluency. During daily journal writing the children practice letter-sound connection as well as forming letters efficiently. You can support writing at home by encouraging them to “say the word, and write down the sounds you hear.” Get them busy creating shopping and wish lists, and encourage them to write their own thank-you notes following the upcoming festive season! On December 5<sup>th</sup>, the children will be able to meet the author, Cynthia Cotten, who will be visiting our school. This will really give the children a sense of what they can achieve by writing.

Math instruction moves forward with the concept of taking apart and putting numbers back together. Children will be tasked with exploring a number (let’s say 9) by breaking it into two parts, i.e. 4 and 5 and then putting it back together. This will form the basis for addition and subtraction concepts later on in the school year. You can help to reinforce this concept at home by simply hard-boiling a dozen eggs and then letting the children explore with separating the number 12! Manipulatives can be found anywhere!

Social Studies and Science thematic units will focus on Wants and Needs (Holiday Wish Lists) and Weather.

Our Holiday Party will be held on Friday, December 19 at 2:00. We will be constructing Gingerbread Houses. I will be asking for supplies and volunteers for this event, as well as for some the week prior. Please let me know if you are available. As always, it remains my pleasure to work with you and your children. Please feel free to “touch base” with me anytime you have questions or comments.