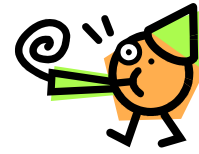


A Note From 1-B



January 9, 2009

Happy New Year! I hope you all enjoyed quality time with family and friends over the holiday. The children have come back from break eager to return to the routines of our day. In the classroom we are training our minds and bodies to learn.

In Reading, the children have been practicing an old skill a new way. "Read to Self" fosters independence and responsibility. The children and I have important work to do during our Reading Workshop block. We are learning that the more time I spend making sure they do their job, the less time I have to do mine. This week we defined reading to self and discussed why it is so important. We made a list of the role of the students and my role as the classroom teacher during this time. The goal this week was to build stamina for young readers to read independently. Readers have responded very positively to this new way of reading! Next week we will continue to extend the length of time that children can read to self, and introduce a new way of reading, "Read to Someone."

In Open Circle we talked openly about a topic that is near and dear to every first grader... saying those tough words, "Can I play?" The children shared why approaching a group of their peers is so challenging. We talked about how to join friends on the playground, a sibling at home, or even an unfamiliar group of kids. We practiced saying the words, "Can I play?" many times. Once we had determined that it is hard for kids to say, "Can I play?" we thought about what kids could do to make that easier. What if you are in the group that is playing? What if you notice a friend standing alone? What could you do to make that friend feel welcome? You could say the words, "Do you want to play?" It is much easier for a child in the midst of playing with friends to stop and ask, "Do you want to play?" than it is for a child who is not playing to say, "Can I play?" Children realize this and we practiced both. Next week we will see if children noticed friends not playing and asked them to play. We will also talk about if it is now any easier to say, "Can I play?"

As we head into the new year, I would encourage you to use the Conversation Starters included in each newsletter. They are thought out carefully so that every student should be able to answer the questions. If your child is struggling to tell you about these topics, he or she may be distracted during lessons. You can discuss where he or she chooses to sit on the rug and what he or she can do to increase attention.

Announcements

- Thank you for joining us at *Why Spider Lives On Ceilings!* The children were excited to have an audience and share this production with you!
- New Guest Reader and Computer Volunteer sign-up sheets have been posted. Please feel free to stop in before or after school to sign-up. If you have already been Guest Reader, please hold off a week or so, so that parents who have not yet come in get a chance to do so. Thanks. A reminder that if Thursday mornings is not convenient for you, you will get an opportunity to come in later in the year at a more convenient time. We would love to hear from everyone! ☺
- Thursdays we have Art. Please send your child dressed to school on Thursdays in clothing that you won't mind a few signs of a messy day coming home on.
- Monday, January 19: No school, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Friday, February 6: Progress Reports sent home

- Wednesday, February 13: Family Open School Night
- Monday, February 16 – Friday, February 20: No School
- We are gladly accepting donations of soft tissues this cold season!

Conversation Starters

- ❖ What are the three ways you can read a book?
- ❖ What is your job during Read to Self?
- ❖ What is Mrs. Byrnes job during Read to Self?
- ❖ Why is it so important that you learn how to read independently?
- ❖ What books do you read during Read to Self?
- ❖ What makes a good first page of a writing story?
- ❖ Why don't you want to give away too much in the title of your book?
- ❖ What is data?
- ❖ What types of surveys has Mrs. Byrnes been doing?
- ❖ What is important about how she shows her work on paper?
- ❖ What are some different ways you can sort buttons?

Winter Wear: What You Need To Know

- At recess if your child would like to play in the snow he or she must have the following: winter boots (waterproof, no Uggs please), snow pants, a winter coat, gloves or mittens and a hat or hood.
- Waterproof boots and gloves are helpful as we have recess at 10:30 and again at noon. Wet gear will not have time to dry.
- Please label all of your child's snow gear! Our Lost & Found overflows in the winter, let's keep 1-B's gear and clothes in 1-B.
- Winter wear effects arrival and dismissal time. Please help your child arrive to school by 8:30. Our morning routine begins as they walk in the door. We do our best to walk out the door at 3:05. Some days you'll see us at 3:00 and some days we will be there at 3:10~ it is the price of 21 children traveling together. 😊
Thank you for being on time at dismissal.

Have a great weekend,
Sarah Byrnes