

# K-K News

December 12, 2008

Dear K-K Families:

Thank you to everyone that returned the "Topics I Can Write About" homework sheet this week. Your young writers were very excited about the stories they have to share, and I appreciate your support with this. This assignment seemed like an appropriate place to revisit the structure of the literacy program in K-K, and I hope that what follows will help you understand the work that continues in class each day.

I view learning to read and write as the equivalent of assembling a 500-piece jigsaw puzzle. Children come to the table with different "pieces" - that is, skills and understandings that contribute to the whole of learning to read and write. Of course we must assist them in gathering all of those different pieces, such as letter identification; letter/sound relationships; rhyming skills; vocabulary development; the understanding of the meaning of "letter," "word," and "sentence;" the function and use of punctuation. However, I think it is also critical for us to help children look at the big picture - why all of those things matter. Thus, your children work on skill development each day in the whole group when we read together, work on interactive writing (a practice in which children take turns with the marker, while all of us plan together the content of the message), or play rhyming or letter games as a class. I also meet with small groups or individuals - especially during stay days - to work on skills that specific children need to develop. The focus on the big picture comes from the discussions we have when Julie and I read books

aloud to the class and discuss the choices that an author or illustrator made, or when we write for the class and discuss our choices as writers. When the children have time to read independently, which they do each day, or write independently, as they do in journals and writing workshop, they have the opportunity to see how all of those pieces fit together.

In the next few months, we will be working on personal narratives in writing workshop. Thus, the lists you shared will help your children select a topic; consider the beginning, middle and end of the story; work to match illustrations and text in their writing; and to share and get feedback about their writing from peers. It is an exciting process, and we look forward to sharing the fruits of our labors in the months ahead!

### **In other news...**

- Speaking of the fruits of our labors, thank you to everyone who cheered on our book of Alphabet Playground. I finally got the book sent off to the author, and now we will wait to see if there is a response!
- Thanks also to all of the people who have volunteered to help with our piñata creation and fiesta. Fiesta volunteers, a note will come home next week outlining your responsibilities for that day. For everyone else, we would welcome some donations for the piñata and fiesta. The children will be researching what would be authentic contents for a piñata, so please do not run out to the store to buy items right away. I know from experience that we will need candy canes; clementines; two sets of identical wrapped hard candies (e.g., 24 peppermints and 24 cinnamon disks); and 24 small toys (you yos, whistles, etc.) for the piñata. For the fiesta, we will need a gallon of milk, flour tortillas, and

some hot cups, paper plates and napkins. I will post a sign up sheet outside the classroom on Monday; please sign up for the item(s) you can bring in, and note the date for delivery (piñata items will need to be in on Friday, December 19; fiesta items can arrive on Monday or Tuesday, December 22 or 23). Thank you in advance for your help with this exciting project!

- In mathematics, we are wrapping up our work on creating, recording and labeling patterns. Please come check out the children's work, which will be posted in the hallway next week. Also next week, we will move on to decomposing patterns.
- Note that we have an assembly first thing on Monday morning, so please be sure that your children arrive on time.

That is all for now. Enjoy the weekend with your children and please remember that library books are due on Monday morning.

Sincerely,

*Lynn*