

K-K News

December 5, 2008

Dear K-K Families:

Welcome back! I hope that everyone enjoyed the Thanksgiving break. It was wonderful to see the children again on Tuesday, and it has been a very full week in the classroom. In mathematics, we have continued our study of pattern. Last week, we focused on attributes and comparisons; this week, we focused on creating a variety of linear, repeating patterns with math manipulatives. There is additional information about this unit in your child's home folder today.

We have begun our study of Mexico, which will continue for the next few months in the classroom. Initially, we focus on geography. Where is Mexico located on a map? What does the Mexican flag look like? The children became quite adept at locating Mexico on our globes, maps and atlases this week, and we will look at the flag more closely next week. We also spent time discussing what the children know about Mexico, and their questions. The guiding question for this unit is "How do families live in Mexico?" This allows us to think about topics of food, clothing, housing, toys, and pets as we generate questions. One child asked about how Christmas is celebrated in Mexico, which brings us to an important topic: the observation of holidays in K-K.

With Hanukkah and Christmas approaching at the end of the month, and Kwanzaa following Christmas, we will take time next week to read a bit about each holiday. It is important for

children to know why holidays are being celebrated, whether those holidays are part of their own traditions or not. We will discuss ways that families in K-K celebrate the different holidays at home, and then use this discussion as a springboard for conversation and comparison about the observation of Christmas in Mexico. We will culminate this part of the unit with a fiesta on the Tuesday before December vacation, and then return to a focus on the topography of Mexico and its impact on food, clothing and shelter when we return from the December break.

Finally, in writing workshop over the past several weeks, we have been working on storytelling. The children tell a personal narrative, and we work on identifying the beginning, middle and end of each story. We also ask clarifying questions to help the storyteller improve his/her story. We will be moving on to writing stories down in the next few weeks, and I am looking for your assistance with this part of our work. In your child's home folder is a sheet labeled "Topics I Can Write About." Please sit with your child and generate a list of topics for stories he/she might want to tell or write in writing workshop. Writers can't write from an empty head, and this list will support your children as they think of topics for their stories. Please help us by doing two things: 1) Have the adults do the writing so we can read the words in the small space given; and 2) Put the names of specific people or places in titles on your list so that we can get them right. Also, while broad topics (my dog, my brother) are useful, short, specific incidents (e.g., When the dog ate my dinner) are often helpful to young writers. Thank you for completing this form and returning it next week!

In other news...

- Thank you to Jennifer Halloran for her help with the November book orders, which arrived this week. The December order has

been placed, and should arrive before the vacation.

- In anticipation of the holiday celebration that will be part of the Mexico unit, we will need a few volunteers on Friday, December 12 and Monday, December 15 from 2:00-2:30 to help with piñata construction (the children don't know this yet...please keep it to yourselves for now!). Please send me a note if you would like to help with that. Also, volunteers will be needed for our fiesta, Tuesday, December 23, from 9:30-11:00. Again, let me know if you are available to help on that morning. Thank you!

I think that is all for now. Given the recent spell of illnesses in K-K, I wish you a warm and healthy weekend with your children!

Sincerely,

Lynn