

December 2008

Dear Parents,

I hope everyone enjoyed the Thanksgiving break and is ready for the busy month of December. In KM, we will be fitting a lot into the next three weeks before the holiday break.

In language arts, we will be focusing on the letters K and L as well as spending a week reviewing several letters. The children will continue with activities involving rhyming and beginning sounds as they work on strengthening their phonemic awareness. I have begun a new spelling program with the children called, "Words Their Way." The children were given an assessment to determine their current level in the area of spelling. To begin the program, the entire class is involved in sorting pictures in various ways. These sorts are concept sorts and are teaching the children how to sort. The first one involved sorting a group of pictures by fruit and not a fruit. Another asked the children to sort pictures by animals, plants and other. In the next couple of weeks, the children will be grouped according to their current ability levels and will begin sorting pictures, letters or words that focus on their particular needs. For example, one group may be asked to sort pictures into rhyming groups. Another group may sort pictures by the beginning sounds. Another group may sort words by the short vowel sound in the words. In Writer's Workshop, I have recently demonstrated how to create a list of topics that could be used for story ideas. I showed the children how to think of ideas from their personal experiences. I wrote my list with the help of the children using kindergarten spelling. I will now model how to choose a topic for a story and how to get started writing. I will write an entire story for the children in order to model such skills as choosing a title, sequencing the ideas, leaving a space between words, making words and pictures match, and using end punctuation. The children will begin using invented spelling this month to create their own list of topics they could write about. When ready, the children will begin writing their first stories! In math, we recently started the unit, "What Comes Next?" This unit focuses on patterns. The children will describe, extend,

construct and record patterns. Towards the end of the unit, the children will be asked to identify the unit of a repeating pattern. The unit is the part that repeats. In the pattern circle, square, circle, square, circle, square; the unit is circle, square. The children will also be asked to change patterns into body movements, letters, numbers etc. Hopefully, your child will begin to notice patterns in the environment.

In science, we will finish observing our mold jars in the next couple of weeks. The children have done a nice job describing and recording the changes that have taken place so far. In some of the jars, you can't even see the goldfish crackers any more! It is interesting to note that even though every jar started with the same items (a goldfish cracker and a wet paper towel), the changes are quite different from jar to jar. The children have become keen observers able to accurately record what they see. Now that the cold weather is upon us, I wanted to remind everyone that the children go out almost every day. It is important that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. You should send hats and mittens and a warm coat every day. Also, once there is snow on the ground, children must have snowpants and boots in addition to the other three items if they want to play in the snow. If they do not have all the clothing necessary, they will have to stand on the blacktop. If your child wears his/her boots to school, please remember to pack shoes for him/her to change into.

Some Tidbits:

This Wednesday, some Wellesley Middle School students will be coming to our class to read to the children.

There won't be a book order this month due to the Hunnewell Book Fair this week.

I will be starting mid-year assessments this month in preparation for writing progress reports next month.

Blankets/Beach towels will go home over the December break to be washed. Please return them on January 5 in a plastic bag labeled with your child's name.

Thanks, Donna