

March 22, 2009

Dear 1CM families,

As spring rolls in, we look forward to spending the next few weeks conferencing with parents. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the hallway outside our classroom. We have posted the conference schedule on this web page, which is updated once per week (Monday afternoons). Please be aware that the schedule hanging up on the bulletin board can change almost daily. If you are unable to come in, please call or email to schedule a conference. We look forward to meeting with you.

Students will be performing in their school day Musical Mosaic on Monday morning. At approximately 8:45, classes will be organized and then brought across the street to the Dana Hall building. Please note, your child will only leave school grounds if you've given permission via a note to school.

This week, first grade students will also be hosting a Math morning. Families are invited to come into the classroom on Friday morning, March 27, from 8:45-9:15 to work on math with your child. Please email the teachers as soon as possible if you are not able to make this event. We will invite support staff to come in and be with your child.

The bird unit is flying along. Students have begun experimenting with scientific drawings. Last week they labeled parts of a bird and this week they will take a closer look at a variety of feathers. We'll continue talking about habitats, what makes a bird a bird, and feathers before focusing on the beak.

Students had the great pleasure of participating in a lesson taught by a guest teacher they know very well. A student in the classroom organized materials and performed a lesson on how to make a parachute. This lesson was the introduction of one of our Writer's Workshop sessions which highlighted the option of creating "How to" books. If your son or daughter would like to teach the class how to do something, please encourage them to come and see a teacher. We'll gladly organize a date and time for another guest teacher!

Responding to Errors in Reading

The following was borrowed from a handout given to us by the Reading Intervention staff.

Based on the way most of us were taught to read, we have told a child to “sound it out” when he/she comes to an unknown word. While phonics is an important part of reading, reading for meaning is the primary goal. To produce independent readers who monitor and correct themselves as they read, the following prompts are recommended before saying, “sound it out”.

Give the child a wait time of 5 to 10 seconds. See what she/he attempts to do.

“What would make sense there?”

“What do you think that word could be?”

“Use the picture to help you figure out what it could be.”

“Go back to the beginning and reread.”

“Skip over it and read to the end of the sentence. Now what do you think it could be?”

“Put in a word that would make sense there.”

“Look at how that word begins. Start it out and keep reading.”

Most important, focus on what the child is doing well and attempting to do. When the child is having difficulty and trying to work out trouble spots, comments such as the following are suggested:

“Good for you. You are trying to work it out.”

“That was a good try. Yes, that word would make sense there.”

“I noticed the way you looked at the picture to help yourself.”

“I noticed you went back to the beginning of the sentence and tried again. That’s what great readers do.”

“You are becoming a great reader. I’m proud of you.”

Bits and Pieces

*Please be sure your child brings a snack and a drink to school everyday. Each month, we’ve been going through the entire snack donation. Encourage your child to pack her/his own snack.

*Please be sure your child has extra clothing in his/her cubby. It gets very muddy in spring!

*Thank you for letting us know of travel plans in advance.

Teachers generally don't send work home if a child is away on vacation. If you are traveling and would like your child to have some work to do, encourage a writing journal, card or board games and lots of long walks to observe things around you.

Questions to ask your child:

- What is your favorite part of the Musical Mosaic performance?
- How do you know when a word ends with ck?
- Which addition/subtraction strategy do you usually use?
- Which games will you be teaching me on Friday? –If you'll be in attendance
- What do you think your teachers will say at our conference?
- When working on short vowels, which picture represents a, e, i, o, u. (a-apple, e-a man named Ed, i-itchy, u-a toddler using arms to motion up)
- Which book in your book tub do you enjoy reading?
- Have you received any letters from Italy?

Have a wonderful week,
Lisa and Lynn