

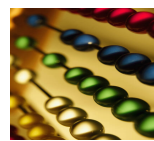
What's New In Mrs. Smith's Class



Balanced Literacy -

1. Shared reading - for these first several weeks our shared reading activities are centered around our Morning Messages - finding letters that are in our names, finding letters we know - and our interactive charts - these are charts written together in class where the children come up and actually help write part of the words. At this time they are listening for beginning sounds and writing the corresponding letters. As the year progresses, we will listen for ending sounds, medial sounds, vowel sounds, etc. Our first chart will be "I see ____." filling in their own names.
2. Word Study -
 - Review of letter names and sounds - this week focusing on t, f, b
 - Recognizing our names
 - Hearing and making rhymes - listening for rhymes in the story, Sheep In A Jeep
3. Reading Workshop -

- Introduction to the workshop format
 - We are readers even in Kindergarten - we can read names and many signs (environmental print)
 - Strong readers read their favorite books over and over.
 - Strong readers take care of their books just like they take care of their toys.
4. Writing Workshop -
 - Introduction to the workshop format and procedures
 - Learning that writers tell and write stories from their lives - from their hearts.



Math

Activities will include:

- Continuing with morning routines (calendar, weather, growing number line, attendance)
- Introduction to pattern blocks
 - Introduction to measurement
- Creating a birthday graph and looking at the information it gives us-

last week we created a graph that showed what color bus we ride home on.

- Counting activities



Handwriting

Tracing over letters as they are reviewed and practicing strokes (formal handwriting begins in a few months)



Full Values Contract

We always begin a new year talking about how to make our classroom and school a safe place so that learning can take place. We are taking a slightly different approach this year,

implementing a program called "Full Values." It is designed to help students learn a set of behavioral norms or core values that can be applied to every aspect of the school day, from the classroom to the lunchroom to the playground. There are 6 core values -

- Be present
- Be safe
- Commit to a goal
- Be honest
- let go and move on

- Care for yourself and others
- (We are using this approach throughout the school district, from Kindergarten through high school!) We want to provide all students with tools that will promote learning, responsibility and accountability while providing safe and supportive ways for confronting behaviors that are devaluing and demeaning. You may remember the character traits that we taught in years past - respect, responsibility, caring, fairness, honesty, self-control, persevering, etc; we can now take each one of these traits and apply them to the core values.

We have begun our Kindergarten year focusing on building a classroom community in which we **care for ourselves and others**. After we read the story, Chrysanthemum, by Kevin Henkes, we began to make a list of ways to do this and so far we have chosen helping, being kind, sharing, listening and using manners. What wonderful ways to treat each other! Another book that we'll be reading is 26 Big Ways Small Hands Can Help.

We also saw that we could **care for ourselves and others** on the bus by making sure we each buckle up,

keep hands and feet to ourselves, walk, keep our voices quiet, stay in our seats.

As the year progresses we'll focus on other values as well.

Reminders ...

Monday - Library

Wednesday - Art

Thursday - Physical Education
(Sneakers, please)

Friday - Music



Home And School Connection

Birthday congratulations go to Shane who turns 5 this week and Joey C. who turns 6! Congratulations, Shane and Joey! (Reminder that our birthday celebrations in the classroom allow for the children to bring a favorite book to share with the class and a guest reader to read the book - parent, grandparent, etc if desired. (Because of allergies and state nutritional guidelines, we are not having food as part of our celebrations.)

As you can see, we are beginning to get into a regular schedule this week.

We begin the reading journey of our 5 & 6 year olds, although it really is a continuation of what you as parents have already begun. And what an important job you have had and will continue to have - according to a 1985 study by the *National Commission on Reading*, reading aloud to children is the single most important intervention for developing their literacy skills. (*Building the Reading Brain*, 2004, p 45.) Benefits include an increase in

vocabulary and story comprehension, familiarization with language patterns, and a familiarity of the reading process, With that in mind, I encourage you to continue to make a point of spending at least 15 EACH day reading to and with your children, making it an enjoyable experience that in turn will make them want to become readers!

Homework will be sent home several nights each week. These activities are meant to reinforce what we are doing in class and should not take your child more than 5-10 minutes to complete. Some activities can be completed in an evening; others can be worked on over the course of several days and I will indicate that.

If you are finding that your child needs a great deal of time to complete an activity or is becoming frustrated with it, it is best to stop it and try later on or another day. If you notice that it is difficult for your child to understand the skills being reinforced, please send in a note so that I can modify it. Each month I will send home 2 monthly calendars with an activity for each day of the month. Your child can select 3 activities a week or complete them all! These are optional, but serve as excellent reinforcements for what we are doing in class. Please return the calendars at the end of the month so I can see what great work your child has done!



Looking ahead:

*September 20 -
School pictures*

*September 22 -
Back to School Night, 6:30;*

*September 29 -
School's closed*