

September 24, 2008

Dear Families,

Thank you so much for the wonderful potluck breakfast, it was great to see all of you and celebrate the start of the year! It has been a real pleasure getting to know your children and establishing our classroom community. We have been taking our time to ensure that everyone has adapted to the new routines and we are well on our way to becoming a caring and cohesive first grade community. We recently had meetings to discuss what we can do as part of our community. Here are some of the ideas:

- "Be a good sport."
- "Share your toys and other things."
- "Say 'I'm sorry' when you hurt someone's feelings."
- "Let friends join in."

Morning Activities

As children arrive, they will be responsible for checking their jobs, reading the daily message, and engaging in a morning activity. It may be reading, writing, drawing, playing a game, or showing their grown ups around the room. If there is a specific task that we would like the children to complete, directions will always be explicit. Children should get in the habit of entering the room and promptly engaging in a focused activity in order to get the day started in a steady way.

Homework

Our first homework assignment will be given on Tuesday, October 7th. At this point in the year, homework will be given only on Tuesday nights. Later in the year, we will increase the amount of homework to twice a week. We will be sure to distribute parent notes to let you know when this transition occurs.

- There will be a system in place to help children become more independent in handing in their homework. On the morning homework is due, they will be responsible for putting their homework folder in a basket on the hexagon table closest to the door. This is a routine we encourage them to do independently.
- Unless noted otherwise, homework should always be done in pencil.

- The best way you can foster your child's independence is helping to establish consistent routines at home and to make sure they have time in their schedule to complete the work.

Word Wall Words

In the coming weeks we will begin sending home word wall rings for your child to practice at home. These rings contain sight words that children have learned so far this year. Every week, we add four or five new words. These rings will go home on **Tuesdays** in your child's homework folder. When we begin Thursday homework, the rings will then go home on Thursdays (and be returned on Mondays). Practicing and reviewing these words daily will help your child commit them to memory. In school, children come in contact with these words all day long, but especially during reading, writing, word work, and literacy centers, where students engage in many activities, such as playing word wall games, stamping the words, breaking words up and then putting back together, and using magnetic letters.

It would be very helpful if at home you help to support your child's comfort with these words by trying one or more of the following activities:

- Search for Word Wall Words in books, newspapers, or magazines.
- Write a sentence using as many Word Wall Words you can.
- Write a word multiple times, each time using a different color marker, pencil, or crayon.
- Play "Guess my word": give clues such as "I'm thinking of a word that has three letters, starts with a W, and ends with an S. What is my word?"
- Say a Word Wall Word (like "all") and see how many rhyming words your child can name ("tall, mall, ball, small...").
- Write the words using sidewalk chalk, magnetic letters, or even type them on the computer.

These are just a few examples of activities that you and your child can do together at home to reinforce these words. Use your imagination, the

possibilities are endless, and if you think of any more activities that work, please share them.

Toys/Jewelry /Candy

Toys and jewelry from home (action figures, gameboys, dolls, playing cards etc...) are not allowed in school as they often cause distraction during the course of your child's day and are easily lost or misplaced. They also foster a feeling of "have" or "have not" that can make children feel uncomfortable. Checking your child's backpack regularly would be greatly appreciated. Finally, candy is not allowed at school; we have many birthday celebrations during the year where we invite children to bring in a sweet treat for the class.

Messages

Email is the best way to get in touch with us and it is checked regularly. We are working as a team and would greatly appreciate if you include both of us on any emails you send.

Our emails are jatlas@lrei.org and lblank@lrei.org.

Warm regards,

Jamie and Lindsay

Dates to remember:

Thursday, October 2nd- Curriculum night (6:00 p.m.)

School Closed:

Tuesday, September 30th- Rosh Hashanah

Thursday October 9th – Yom Kippur

Friday October 10th- Columbus Day