

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 their ideas:

- “give compliments to your friends when you like something”
- “listen to the person who is speaking”
- “keep our community clean by pushing in chairs”
- “share and let your friends join in”

Morning Activities

As children arrive, children will be responsible for checking their jobs, reading the daily message with a grownup, and engaging in a morning activity displayed on the board or placed on the tables. It may be reading, writing, math, social studies or science related. Directions will always be written and children should get in the habit of beginning these activities with their grownup as they enter the room.

Homework

Homework will begin on Tuesday, October 7th. Over the course of the year, we will gradually 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 outside of our classroom. 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 approximately 5 new words. These new cards will go home on **Tuesdays** in your child's homework folder to be added to their ring at home. 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 as 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 rschwartz@lrei.org and erosen@lrei.org

Warm regards,

Rebecca and Emily

Dates to remember:

Thursday, October 2nd- 4^{'s} -1st Grade Curriculum night (6:00 p.m.)

Monday, October 6th -photo day

School Closed:

Tuesday, September 30th- Rosh Hashanah

Thursday October 9th – Yom Kippur

Friday October 10th- Columbus Day