

Start of the Year Information Fours – 2009/2010

Dear Parents,

Thank you for patience and support during phase-in. We know it can be quite a feat for parents to manage the differing phase-in times, and we want you to know it was all worth it in terms of a successful academic and social transition for each of the Fours.

Below please find useful information and details concerning the schedule and routines for our classroom.

Please note: Thursday, September 24th is our Curriculum Night – 6:00pm. We will discuss the curriculum and also child development. You will see pictures of your children at work in school.

Here are the names of people who work with the Fours:

- Teachers:
 - Beth Binnard Bbinnard@lrei.org, 212.477.5316 ext. 394
 - Samson Baker sbaker@lrei.org

- Parent representatives:
 - Connie Butler (Rainer's mom)
 - Juliet Burrows (Aura's mom)

- Specialist Teachers:
 - Julie Sterling – Spanish
 - Sue Ribaudó – Music
 - Deborah Damast – Movement
 - Jesse Karp – Library

- Additional adult support available at school:
 - Mary Young – Learning Specialist
 - Suzanne Cohen – Early Childhood Curriculum Coordinator
 - Rose Reilly – Math Coordinator
 - Michael Thandi – Science Coordinator
 - Roberta Rubien – School Psychologist
 - Kitty Highstein – Nurse

- Please privately let us know about any additional services/specialists your child is seeing outside of school, so that we may serve your child to the best of our abilities.

- Arrival and Dismissal:
 - Arrival is at **8:30am**. Please be punctual. We begin morning meeting at 8:45am with the children, so the fifteen minutes beforehand is important for children to have time to settle into the classroom and say goodbye to their adults. The music is your cue to say goodbye to your child and direct them to the rug. It is not unusual to see some separation regression in the first several weeks.
 - Dismissal from the room is at **2:45pm**. Please be prompt when picking up your child at the end of the day. We release children only to parents and designated caregivers. If someone else will be picking up your child, you must write this on the Pick Ups sheet outside the classroom door. Also, for playdates, both sets of parents must write on the Pick Ups sheet who will pick up the children. It is very important for us to see your child and grown-up leaving together, so please be sure to say good-bye to us. **Please inform caregivers and other adults about these important routines.**
- **Daily Schedule** – The daily schedule is posted in the rug area. It uses both words and pictures in order to support diverse learners. Feel free to take a look each day.
 - Meeting – A time to gather as a group, discuss the schedule for the day, talk about group issues that come up, and important news from children. Meetings also help children to practice patience, turn taking, listening, responding, and focusing on the topic. Generally, we don't do show & tell, unless it is a rare and special item (for instance, something from nature found on a trip).
 - Work Time – The children choose an activity (blocks, paperwork, painting, etc). The goal is for the Fours to work with commitment and make social connections to their peers. Please dress children comfortably, and in clothes suitable to get dirty. At the end of work time, the children help to pick up all of the materials in our classroom community.
 - Snack – This consists of crackers, fresh fruit, juice, and cheese. Snack is an important time to socialize with peers and learn passing, turn-taking, and conversation skills.
 - Roof – We go up to the roof in all kinds of weather, so **please dress your child accordingly**. We also ask that you please send your child with sturdy shoes that are comfortable (**no flip-flops**). Activities on the roof are geared towards cooperative play, as well as gross motor skill development. There are climbers and large hollow blocks for the children to create their own play spaces.

- Story – After roof, we come downstairs and meet on the carpet for a story. We then transition to lunch and rest.
- Lunch – A hot lunch (meat, carbohydrates and vegetables) and sandwiches are served every day. It is not unusual for the children to eat only a little bit during the first weeks of school. We will let you know if there are any concerns that continue for your child in particular.
- Rest – This is a quiet and peaceful time when children can look at books, draw (journals and crayons will be introduced in the coming week), and listen to music. Each child may bring a small stuffed animal & blanket. Please leave action figures and Barbies at home (as these can be distracting to others.)
- Afternoon work time – This is a time when the group is sometimes in half groups (during specialist classes), and we work on more focused projects such as cooking, writing & dictation, and science and math activities.
- Closing meeting – This is a time for the Fours to wrap-up the day and come together as a group. We often share what happened during the day and discuss social issues that came up. We also look ahead to tomorrow's schedule. The final part of closing meeting is doing the Paper Chain, where we count how many days we've been at school.
- Common language we use at LREI with the children:
 - "Steady" – This word is used to describe the children's body position and behavior. When your body is calm & under control, you are steady.
 - "Work" – We use this word to refer to the children's explorations with the materials. Play is the work of young children.
 - "Pick-up" – This is used as opposed to 'clean-up,' which implies dirty or messy.
- Parent/Teacher Communication
 - Phone calls – We are available in the classroom between 8-8:30am and 3-3:30pm. For important changes to pick-up arrangements that you were not able to leave us a note about in the morning, please leave a message at the front desk and ask that it be hand-delivered to the room.
 - Please keep us posted on parent travel, medications, nightmares, or any changes to routines.
 - Emails – We regularly send reminders or logistical information by email. If you would like to discuss anything about your child, you may email convenient times to reach you, and we will be happy to call you or speak in person.
 - Monthly letters – These are posted on the LREI blog (LS Parent News), which is sent out on Thursday afternoon. Please check the blog for updates about happenings in the classroom.

- Parent / Teacher conferences – This is an important time to talk about your child’s progress and experiences in school. Conferences are scheduled in November and April. Parents are encouraged to schedule additional meetings any time there are concerns or information to be shared.
- Assemblies – Parent assemblies are scheduled throughout the year, and we will keep you posted on the dates.

- Illnesses
 - Please keep your child home if he/she is not feeling well enough to participate fully in the day, or if he/she is contagious or feverish. The child must be fever-free for a 24 hour period before returning to school. **Please call or email if your child will be out.** Kitty our nurse is responsible for dispensing all medications, which should be given to her directly with instructions.

- Birthdays
 - Birthdays are celebrated at the end of the school day (at about 2:30pm). Parents are invited to come. We ask that any special treats (cupcakes, etc.) be identical, including frosting/sprinkles colors, since differences can cause upsets and hurt feelings! Please remember **NO NUTS OR SEEDS!** For birthdays that fall during the summer, we will have a collective summer birthday party in June. For home birthday parties or parties happening outside of school, invitations must be sent through the mail. Such parties are best held on the weekends, as the anticipation often affects classroom activities and behaviors.

- Cubbies – please take home items from cubbies and paper cubbies every Friday, and replenish clothing as needed (changes in size and season).

- Please read the LREI Parent handbook when it arrives.

Thank you so much for all of your support in these first few weeks of school. We're looking forward to a terrific year in the Fours!

Sincerely,

Beth and Samson