

First Facts- October 15, 2015



Dear Parents,



The children have been working very diligently in reading. Each morning we engage in many activities including the morning message where the children discover the concepts of print, beginning and ending letter sounds, high frequency words, previously sent home, and capitals and periods. Next, the children work with me to discover consonants, vowels, small, tall and tail family letters in the high frequency words of the week. Last, we play phonemic awareness and building words games where the children practice blending letters to make words. We continue to learn words by creating rhyming word families and reading new poems each day in the Poetry Packet. The children have also been enthusiastically engaging in many new reading games and learning strategies such as make a prediction, use of picture clues, previewing the story, structure of a sentence, framing words/sounds and drawing conclusions have helped students read and comprehend their stories more effectively.

During Readers' Workshop time the children created reading goals, anchor charts, learned how to find their reading spots, notice details in their books with sticky notes and how to "shop" for their leveled readers. They have also obtained a reading partner in class and have learned how to sit side by side and read together. The phrase we use is *"Elbow to elbow, knee to knee: book in the middle so we both can see."* The children have a Readers' Workshop Pocket where they keep their books. Your child currently has 4 books they shopped for but this will grow throughout the year.

Each group meets with me individually many times per week to practice the skills. They are enjoying it very much. While the children meet with me the other students are reading and completing their morning work which was previously explained and modeled.



The children have made great strides in handwriting and feel more confident during Writers' Workshop time to write letter sounds to create words, sentences and picture stories. Currently many of the children are making letter strings to create words in their writing. They are using the sounds they know to write words. They understand the routine and what is expected of them. I am pleased with the enthusiasm they are showing towards their learning. We have engaged in launching Small Moments of Writers' Workshop where the children have learned how to work independently using both pictures and words, stretching their ideas and sounding out words, adding to their picture and adding to their words. I have taught them that writers write about things they know and care about- they

are the expert. They have learned about writing a beginning with people and places, a middle which incorporates first, next and last and the ending which includes wrapping up the story with feeling. All small moment stories begin and end at the same time and place. They have also learned how to use their Writers' Workshop binders. All of these activities serve to embellish lifelong handwriting skills, following directions, reading skills, good writing skills and fine motor practice. It is developmentally appropriate at this time for your child to draw pictures to express their ideas. The children are very proud of their papers during Share Time which is the great beginning of the reading and writing process.

It is also appropriate at this time for children to make backward letters and numbers. Until they have seen these items in print and written them many times after my instruction they will begin to naturally write them properly. During Writers' Workshop time each morning the children close their eyes and place a "movie in their mind" about the topic we are working on. Currently the children are working on telling and writing a story of events in the present tense, a reenactment of what is happening. We call this a storyteller's voice.



The students will enjoy using our Bag-A-Book system starting in a couple weeks. It is a feeling of great accomplishment for the children to see all the titles they are reading on their log sheet. Please look behind the log sheets, when you receive them, to remind yourselves of some helpful hints to assist your child with reading. Please keep in mind this is not a reading program but a way to engage your child in the reading process each day of their personal life. Please read the letter I will insert into your child's bag explaining what the goals are for the Bag-A-Book program. Also, everyone has a busy schedule. If there are certain nights filled with sports and family activities it is ok to keep a book for two or more nights and read it another evening.



In Making Meaning we completed the story *It's Mine* by Leo Lionni, a fable about sharing, speaking politely and solving problems. The vocabulary words the children learned from this story are quarrel, rumble, tremble and peaceful. Other words the children have learned so far are rapidly, delighted, bold, timid, memory, independent, delicious, disgusting, public, private, neighborhood and cooperate. They have learned to come to the reading corner quickly and quietly and how to sit in their reading corner meeting spots along with how to turn to their partner and speak in complete sentences during this time.



In Mathematics the children received the assessment on Unit 1. Only on occasion will a Home Link be sent home on Friday. Currently we are working in

Unit 2 and we will focus on numbers all around, number grids, analog clocks, money and unit labels for numbers. The children have learned how to play many games with their math partner including Monster Squeeze, Penny-Dice, Bunny Hop, Addition Top-It and Rolling for Fifty. Next, we will begin Unit 3 based on visual patterns, number patterns and counting. This unit continues the studies of important first grade topics such as telling time to the half hour, dimes are added to children's existing collection of coins to be counted and the children will continue solving addition and subtraction number models or problems. We will also be doing a literature/math activity using the book *Ten Black Dots*.



The children have been working diligently in our Social Studies unit based on *Time for School and Families*. This unit incorporates the importance of rules and responsibilities at home and at school. We have created many charts writing ideas of how to be more responsible and how to help at school and home as a family member. Next we will begin the unit about *In My Community*. The children will learn about maps, relative locations, human and physical characteristics of places, special things we do with family and how families have a past.



In science our class continues to work on the year long study of weather. Recently we have made weather calendars and have measured temperatures and moving molecules. We will observe how the liquid molecules move fast and rise when the temperature is hot and when the thermometers were placed in cold water the molecules slow down and the temperature falls. Then we will transfer this data on paper thermometers kept in their weather folder. Other areas of study will include the sun as the most important source of heat, watching clouds change from cirrus clouds to cumulus then to stratus and finally fog along with wind speed. The children will also be learning about natural sources of water and rain gauges.



Currently, I am exposing the children to new programs that help their fine motor skills along with differentiated reading and math activities I have placed on their computer. I introduced the program called *Families Long Ago: Living History from Colonial Williamsburg*. In this program they had to listen to stories about families of long ago, view artifacts and help piece them together, build a house they might have seen long ago and create a piece of artwork with pictures of clothing, houses and people from the past. The children are also working on Raz Kids in the classroom and in the lab. I set up each of their assignments and

will send the access code home on Friday with your first grader. The children also engaged in reading/math games on the ipads.

Other Items of Interest:

1. Picture re-take day is Thursday November 5th.
2. Many of the activities we engage in require teacher instruction and the activities are completed in class based upon the lesson. If your child misses school I will help them catch up otherwise the Math Home Link/s will be sent home when your child returns to school. Thank you.
3. Please send in water bottles for your child to keep in their locker if you would like. They will use these after recess and gym. We can save valuable learning time and not have to wait in a drinking fountain line.
4. Mr. William's Haunted Garage: October 18th from 4-7.



5. **Please remember there is no school for students in the afternoon of Friday October 30th. The students DO have school in the morning. Please send children in their costumes. Please remember the school policy of NO costume weapons or masks. Thank you. The parade begins at 8:45 and the assembly will be at 9:00 AM. Dismissal will be at 11:36 AM. Teachers have professional development in the afternoon.**
6. Election Day November 3rd-NO SCHOOL for students. Professional Development for teachers all day.
7. Conferences Wednesday November 11th and Thursday November 12th.

Thank you,
Michelle Hunwick