

Friday, February 1, 2008

Dear Parents:

Next Thursday is the 100th day of school, or Hundred Day. We will have many math activities to celebrate this day. I am inviting you to create a collection of 100 objects with your child. He/she may bring them to share on Thursday, February 7 for Hundred Day.

Today is the last day of our thematic unit about Kenya. We have learned a lot about the people, animals and places of Kenya. We have heard African stories and music. The Social Studies Link Book this week was Houses and the Read Aloud book was Who's In Rabbit's House? The Barbara Saul book was My Blanket and the Science Link Book was I Am Going To Kenya.

The letter of the week was "Ff" and the AlphaFriend who helped us with the name, shape and sound of the letter "Ff" was Fifi Fish. We wrote the letter, made a list of things that start with the "Ff" and played lots of games to learn about "Ff". Have your child tell you 5 things that start with letter "Ff".

Today was a very busy day. It was "Blanket Day". Each child who brought their favorite blanket to school practiced oral language skills by sharing about their blanket in front of the class. We will be making another class book. Your child drew a picture of his/her blanket and wrote a story that had a topic sentence, three supporting detail sentences and a summary sentence. I took pictures of your child and his/her blanket to put on his/her page of the class book.

Next week, we will be starting a new thematic unit: Look Up! Exploring Space. This is a fun and exciting unit. Be sure to ask your child every day what the theme for the day was. Every day I will be teaching a different concept. It might be about the sun, planets, moon or just the difference between day and night. The centers are also tied into the theme. We will have a space shuttle in the dramatic play center for the children to "fly" into space. They will operate robot arms, color, assemble space puzzles, create art and have many other experiences related to space.

Please remember that EVERY day next week is a minimum day because of parent/teacher report card conferences. All the students in the school will be dismissed at 1:30 pm every day. I am asking that you be prompt in picking your child up from school, as I need to be in my classroom ready for the first conference by 1:40. I have finished with the formal assessments and am looking forward to meeting with you and discussing your child's progress. As an aid in preparing for conferences I have attached the conference concerns sheet to this note. You may return it to school with your child, bring it with you to your conference, or just use it at home to get ready.

Every child in Room 9 has had an opportunity to be the Child Of The Week. When your child was Child Of The Week, I sent home some dittos for you to fill out and return so that we could get to know your child better. Mrs. Hoopes cut the shapes out and created a page for our Child Of The Week class book. This is one of the class's favorite big books to get out and read independently.

Now that every student has had an opportunity to be Child Of The Week, I am embarking on a second round so that each child has the opportunity to be the Child Of The Week once again. When your child has been selected to be the Child of the Week again he/she will bring home a rolling backpack. Inside is a Cat In The Hat stuffed character that will live at home with your child for the week. This is a wonderful opportunity for your child to learn the responsibility of taking good care of other's things. Also inside the backpack is a copy of Margaret Wise Brown's book, The Important Book. Please read this book together with your child. I am inviting you to use the format of the book to create a page for our class's own version of The Important Book about your child. I would ask that you start your child's page saying, "The important thing about _____ is ..." You can be as creative as you have the time and energy for in creating this page to help us learn more about your child.

I have changed how the Child Of The Week is selected. For the first part of the year, I randomly chose the Child Of The Week. To reward those students who try hard to follow the class rules, be kind to others and go the extra step, I now select as Child Of The Week the student who has the most golden tickets on Friday (Who has not been Child Of The Week for a second time).

If you have visited our class web site and were unable to hear the AlphaFriend's songs or listen to the weekly podcast, relief is in sight! Next time you visit, you will need to download the Quicktime™ plug-in. Quicktime™ is a free program from Apple that allows you to listen to music or view videos created in that format, such as KIndercast.

I have been taking lots of pictures lately, so be sure to check the class web site often over the next week or so as I put the pictures into the Album section of our web site. There are pictures of the students at center time during the Kenya unit, pictures of kids wearing the Masai necklaces they made, students wearing the African masks they colored, and pictures of children and the blankets they brought today for Blanket Day. Also, we took an imaginary journey to Kenya and I will "illustrate" it with pictures from the classroom and pictures of things the students imagined seeing in Kenya. Be watching for these additions.

As always, you can see the letter of the week, its AlphaFriend, listen to their song and read the lyrics for the letter of the week. Just check under the AlphaFriend heading.