

Friday, March 26, 2010

Dear Parents:

We have finished our 3-week thematic unit, On Our Way: Land, Air and Water Transportation. We have learned about cars, buses, trains, airplanes, helicopters, animals used as transportation, all kinds of boats as well as passenger and traffic safety rules. Our Teacher Read Aloud book was Angela's Airplane. The social science link book was Going Lobstering. Our Barbara Saul book was The Day Train. The Kinderfriends book was To School.

We finished this week with Truck Day. I'd like to thank everyone who helped make this experience for your child such a success! The children drew pictures and wrote an story about the experience. I will make a class book from their pages. At the end of the year, your child will be bringing home a memory book made from all the pages he/she contributed to our class books this year.

I have been using an Internet web site called starfall.com to supplement instruction. The Learn to Read section combines explicit instruction in letter-sound relationships, word recognition skills and reading comprehension strategies with opportunities to apply and practice these skills. This type of systematic, explicit phonics instruction follows the recommendations of the California Department of Education. It weaves the reading-acquisition process together into a cohesive, fun, and entertaining program that kids love! Starfall.com is easy for children and parents to use and it is accessible for free on any web-connected computer.

The stories were written with special attention towards maintaining a simple, coherent, and engaging story line. Word recognition skills are reinforced through word family Phonic Games that teach phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary building and spelling skills. Concept Movies introduce general reading concepts and function as incentive for reading.

A study by the University of Minnesota has documented that children who have a television in their bedroom do worse academically AND nutritiously. Those students with TV's in their bedroom watched more TV, ate more sugary drinks, ate fewer vegetables and did worse in school. Researchers said that, "*refraining from placing a television in ... rooms may be a first step in helping to decrease screen time and subsequent poor behaviors associated with increased television watching.*"

Do you know someone who has a 4 or 5 year old? Pass the word; it's that time of year... There will be a kindergarten orientation for parents of prospective kindergarten students on Wednesday, March 31 at 2:00 pm at Pine Hill School in Room 9. Childcare will be provided for the prospective students in Room 10 during the orientation.