

Friday, April 9, 2010

Dear Parents:

We have finished two of the three weeks of our Japan unit. We learned some Japanese words. The children learned to count to 10 in Japanese and at center time, they wrote the numbers from 1-10 in Japanese. They should have brought home a paper that showed the Japanese numbers and given you their pronunciations. This week we tried some Japanese foods. They are very different in taste and appearance from what the children are used to. We also learned about Japanese clothing and homes. The children wrote in their journals about three things they would like to see if they visited Japan. You might want to discuss with your child what they selected.

The Read Aloud Book was Funny Little Woman. The Big and Little book this week was My Japan Counting Book. The Kinderfriends book was Where Are We Going? Japan. The Social Science Link Book was 10 Oni Drummers. The KinderRoots book this week was Miss Sid. The Alphafriend this week is Mr. X-Ray who is teaching the children all about the letter "Xx".

Open House is on Wednesday, April 14. There will be Book Fair in the library starting at 6:30 PM where you can purchase books if you wish. Classrooms will be open from 7:00 - 8:00 PM. I hope to see you there. This is a wonderful time to go and look at the first grade classrooms. I expect to see lots of 4 year olds inspecting my class too!

Watching television does not make babies smarter, according to a study released in the journal Pediatrics, adding to existing research that challenges the usefulness of baby educational videos and DVDs. "Contrary to parents' perceptions that TV viewing is beneficial to their children's brain development, we found no evidence of cognitive benefit from watching TV during the first two years of life," the authors wrote. Educational DVD and videos geared towards enriching babies and toddlers, such as "Baby Genius," "Brainy Baby" or "Baby Einstein," which proclaim to "encourage discovery and inspire," have no benefits, researchers said.

This echoes a similar finding published in the August issue of Pediatrics. Researchers from the University of Washington and Seattle Children's Hospital Research Institute found no evidence of benefit from baby DVDs and videos and suggested that it may be harmful. Infants who watched the videos understood fewer words than those who did not watch them.

Please make a note on your calendar that Spring Break is April 19-23. There will be NO SCHOOL that week. Classes will resume on Monday, April 26 when we start a new unit.