

Friday, April 16, 2010

Dear Parents:

We have finished our three-week unit: Konnichiwa: Hello Japan. We read a wonderful book about Japan this week. It was a Japanese folktale, Dorobo, The Dangerous. The Kinderfriend book was Center Time. The Barbara Saul book was My Little Opposite Book. The Phonics Library Book was A Pot For Dan Cat. Our Alphafriend this week was Jumping Jill who taught the letter Jj. Your child should have brought home their writing journal about Japan. You should have them read what they wrote to you. They also brought home their fans, cherry blossom trees, Japanese coloring books, carp kites, and lanterns.

We have watched two excellent videos about Japan. The first was Big Bird In Japan. It was the story of Big Bird, from Sesame Street, who gets lost and has many adventures and learns much about Japan. The second was an enchanting story set in post-war Japan called My Neighbor Totoro. You might consider renting and watching them together as a family.

Remember – Next week is Spring Break! There is NO SCHOOL next week. I'm sending home two (2) reading logs. Read during Spring Break and have your child bring a reading log to school on Monday, April 26. The second reading log is for the week of April 26–30 and will be returned on Friday, April 30. Reading together is one of the best gifts you can give your child. This might be a wonderful time to visit the Humboldt County Library together to select some books to read. If your child does not have a library card, you might want to consider getting him/her one. Also, a good way to sustain skills would be to watch educational programming on Channel 13.

From the article, "Ask An Expert", in the April SeeSaw parent guide. "My child never reads on his own, and I feel like I'm always forcing it. How can I get him to enjoy reading more?" "The very first thing you can do is to make time as a family for quiet pleasure reading. Turn off the TV and minimize other distractions like telephone calls. The key to success of this family time is for your child to see you as a model, enjoying your own good book or catching up on current events with your newspaper. The second important element is that everyone gets to choose what he or she wants to read. This is not the time to force a particular book upon your child, nor should he do any reading associated with homework. It is a time during which pleasure reading can be shared, with your child reading to you, another parent, a sibling, or even someone reading to him. If a family reading session is not possible, try to keep up the bedtime-story ritual. As children progress through their elementary-school years, this tradition tends to wane, despite the fact that it continues to be a great benefit. Reading for enjoyment comes naturally for some, but not for others. But if your family is a reading-for-fun family, it may be harder to reject what gives everyone else a good time." Francie Alexander, a former teacher, is vice president and chief academic officer for Scholastic.