

Friday, May 14, 2010

Dear Parents:

This week, we are finishing our thematic unit on Plants. The Phonics Library story was Pig Can Get Wet. Our Teacher Read Aloud was The Carrot Seed. The Story Telling and Retelling (STaR) book was Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf. The Kindergarten teacher directed drawing book was I Can Draw The Farm. I have sent their writing journals home. I am happy with the progress they have made. Please take a few minutes to sit down and read the journal with your child. Remember, most of them are spelling phonetically so if you cannot read it easily, ask your child to read it to you.

We are going on a field trip to Sequoia Park on Tues, June 1. Once again, I am also in need of chaperones for this trip. It is an extensive walking tour of the park, so I need LOTS of adult help!

The annual PTO school carnival will be held on Friday, June 4 at South Bay School. There will be food, games, booths, clowns, and lots of other fun activities. Plan on eating dinner there at the school and then spending some quality family time together! Please note on your calendar that there will NOT be a minimum day on Wednesday, June 2. The minimum day has been moved to the carnival day, Friday, June 4. Please remember to pick your child up at 2:20 on Wednesday and then to pick them up early on Friday, June 4, at 1:30 pm. We are in need of volunteers to help run the booths. I hope that you would consider giving one hour of your time to help out. If you can help me, please write me a note or talk to me at school to arrange a time.

There are only 23 days of school left. We have a lot to do. On Monday we will be starting the last thematic unit of the year Look Around: Exploring Our Environment. We will also be starting to make our Father's Day presents.

I have noticed this week that many students seem unduly tired and as a consequence lack energy and are whiny. I realize that it is light much later but you child's need for 11-13 hours of sleep has not changed. "Studies looking at kids in kindergarten through third or fourth grade show that 85 percent of kids in those grades are not meeting their nightly sleep requirements," James B. Maas told Education World. Maas, a professor of psychology at Cornell University, is the author of two books about sleep, *Power Sleep* for adults and the recently published Remmy and the Brain Train: Traveling Through the Land of Good Sleep for children.

Activities such as after-school athletics, watching television, and using the computer often take away from sleep time, however families in general are not going to bed as early as they need to, experts add. Parents who are staying up too late to get everything done, often keep their children up too late as well.

## SIGNS THAT A CHILD IS SLEEP-DEPRIVED

Maas and Hunt both say that children react to inadequate sleep differently than adults do. Adults who do not get enough sleep generally yawn and feel sleepy all day. Like adults, sleep-deprived children are hard to rouse and exhibit sleepiness in the morning. Unlike adults, however, children generally become more active -- and less able to concentrate -- later in the day.

Because they become increasingly more "wired" as the day progresses, sleep-deprived children often have trouble going to sleep at night. Parents may not realize that their children are not getting enough sleep.

### Tips for Healthful Sleep

Carl Hunt and James B. Maas offer the following tips to help parents help children develop healthy sleep habits:

- Establish a reasonable bedtime. Most elementary school children should be going to bed by 9 p.m. Some children who require more sleep might need an earlier bedtime.
- Allow sufficient time to wind down before bedtime. Children should not be engaging in intense activities, such as watching television, playing video games, or using the computer, right before they go to bed. They need about an hour of down time to prepare to fall asleep. Such relaxing activities as taking a bath or reading a story can help children fall asleep more easily.
- Avoid giving children caffeinated beverages and foods high in sugar in the late afternoon and evening.
- Provide a quiet sleeping area that is conducive to sleep. Maintain a consistent nightly routine. Children should go to bed at the same time every night, including weekends.

"Parents, teachers, and children need to recognize that good sleep habits are just as important to overall health as diet and exercise," Hunt said, adding that a chronic lack of adequate sleep can exacerbate a tendency toward diabetes and being overweight, two growing health concerns in the United States. He also noted that sleep-deprived children are more accident prone than adequately rested children.

"Children develop habits when they're young," Maas said. "If they develop careless sleep habits as kids, they will retain them as adults. We have to learn to value sleep. Sleep is essential; it is not a luxury."

You can read more about their research and find additional online resources about sleep deprivation in children at:

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_admin/admin/admin271.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin271.shtml)