

Friday, October 2, 2009

Dear Parents:

We have finished our first 3-week thematic unit: Me and My Five Senses. Today your child is bringing home their first writing journal. Each day I teach them one thematic idea and afterwards they write about that idea in their journal. Have your child tell you what he/she wrote in their journal. The Barbara Saul book this week was Cats. The KinderFriend book was Me Too! The Phonics Library book that came home was We Can Make It! In mathematics, we have been working on measurement, this week we worked on the idea of comparing capacity and weight.

We are half way through the first trimester of school. Progress reports will be mailed out next week. Please let us know if we need to mail copies to two separate households.

Prompt, daily attendance is essential to your child's success in school. It is important to have your child at school by 8:20 AM every day. Everything we do in kindergarten is built upon previous lessons. If your child misses school, he/she will not have those experiences to build on. The school receives its funding only for children who are in attendance daily. Be aware that this year South Bay Union School District will be much more aggressive in addressing attendance problems.

I want to talk about our Read Alouds, which are designed to replicate and extend the story time sharings that are enjoyed by families. In our Read Alouds, we use the big and little books like Cats and the Kinderfriends books such as Me Too! For beginning readers, the choral reading of the predictable text bridges the gap between story listening and story reading. It encourages children to become active participants in the reading process. The Read Aloud enhances and increases text exploration through repeated readings. It helps to build children's confidence in reading and allows them to learn at their own pace in a risk-free environment.

This week we began learning our letters. We started with the "a" that makes the short a sound. We spend an entire week working on learning the letter name, the letter shape and the letter sound. As part of our language arts curriculum, we use Alphafriends to help the students learn their letters. Alphafriends, a collection of characters designed to teach children about the alphabet and the sounds of the letters, come with their own songs, activities and take-home books. This week your child should have brought home the little Andy Apple book.

If you want to see a picture of the Alphafriend for the week, you can go to Mr. Lentz's class web page at the Pine Hill School website. You can see the Alphafriends; you can listen to the song and read the lyrics. We also soon have an Alphafriends page on the school website.