

January 9, 2018

Dear Parents,

Starting **Tuesday, January 16th**, kindergarten students will be assigned weekly homework to reinforce basic skills in reading and writing. Two leveled books will be sent home at the beginning of each week. These are books that your child should read to you. Please assist them if necessary and encourage them to read the books multiple times throughout the week to develop fluency. Books must be returned in order for your child to get new books for the following week. Homework will usually be sent home on Mondays and will be due on Fridays. Each week students will be given 2 written assignments. The first assignment will be a sight word practice worksheet. The other assignment will alternate between a questioning/vocabulary worksheet, a story map, or a writing piece. The completion of the story map and questioning/vocabulary worksheet will be based on simple picture books from home or one that your child borrows from the library. (Leveled books are not appropriate in this case and should not be used to complete these assignments.) We have listed some guidelines for homework assignments below.

Guidelines for Reading Leveled Books:

Before Reading

- Have your child wash his/her hands.
- Keep books away from food, drinks, and younger siblings.
- Show your child the cover and read the title and author's name.
- Have your child ask questions about the story.

During Reading

- Remind your child to turn the pages carefully at the corners.
- Have your child ask questions about the meaning of unknown words and about details in the story.
- Ask your child to predict what will happen next.
- Have your child repeat familiar phrases or rhymes.
- Have your child point to the words as he/she reads (crispy pointing).
- Help your child to decode unfamiliar words by saying one of the following cues:
 - “Look at the picture.”
 - “Look at the first letter of the word.”
 - “Sound it out.”
 - “Look for chunks in the word.”
 - “Look for word families.”
 - “Think about what would make sense.”

After Reading

- Help your child to recall what happened in the story.
- Relate the story to your child's own experiences.
- Help your child to name the characters and setting (time and place) of the story.
- Some questions to ask:
 - “What happened in the beginning? middle? end?”
 - “What was your favorite part? Why?”
 - “Which character did you like best? Why?”
 - “What does this story remind you of?”

General Writing Guidelines:

1. Have your child write his or her name and the date on the line at the top of the page.
2. Use **pencil only** for the **writing**.
3. Practice **using uppercase and lowercase letters correctly** while attending to **proper form**.
4. Practice **leaving spaces between the words**. At school we use one “finger space” between words.
5. Practice **spelling** words from the "**Sight Words**" list correctly.
6. Practice **using phonetic spelling to write words your child doesn't know how to spell**. Have your child say the words **very slowly** and write as many of the letter sounds he or she can hear.

(Often these words will be spelled incorrectly, which is fine, but the words should be spelled phonetically (e.g., kitn [kitten], wacht [watched]).

7. Practice **adding details** to the writing by being specific and including descriptive words. Encourage your child to **answer** the questions **who, what, when, where, why and how?** when your child is composing the story.
8. If more space is needed for writing, please attach another sheet of paper.
9. **Drawing** and **writing** should **match**.

Narrative Writing Guidelines:

The purpose of narrative writing is to tell a story.

1. Have your child **tell a story about a personal experience** by drawing and writing four or more sentences describing:
 - a. a personal experience like a family outing at the movies or a picnic at the beach;
 - b. a sport or another extracurricular activity in which he or she participates, perhaps ballet or soccer;
 - c. a special event such as a birthday, holiday, or a family trip.
2. Writing should begin with a **topic sentence**, which tells the reader what the story will be about. The last sentence should be a **reaction** to the events that occurred.
3. Practice **using a logical sequence** when telling the story, using words like *first, next, then, last*.

Opinion Writing Guidelines:

The purpose of opinion writing is to express the writer's thoughts on a particular topic.

1. Have your child choose a topic in which they can **express their opinion** and write four or more sentences. The possibilities for topics are endless, but most pieces will either be about something your child likes or dislikes.
2. Writing should begin with a **topic sentence, which should include the opinion**. The sentences that follow should give **reasons why** the writer thinks what he/she thinks. The writing piece should have some type of **closing sentence** that could simply be the topic sentence restated.
3. Transition words like *first, next, last* can be used when your child writes his/her reasons for having a particular opinion.

Thank you for your support with helping your child to continue their progress in learning.

Sincerely,

Kindergarten Team