



February Newsletter 2021



Wow, February already, it feels like we just started January!

Up-coming Events:

Valentine's Day, read-in pajama party, Friday, February 12th **Please do not bring Valentines in!**
We will be working on Valentines for parents and a special little something for the kiddos.

Parent Teacher Conferences will be held in March. This is a wonderful time to have an uninterrupted conversation with your child's teacher to discuss your child's development, milestones, strengths, and areas where we can help. We will send out an email to schedule the meeting, which may be done in person with distancing or via a Zoom meeting.

You may know that February is "I Love to Read Month." You know the importance books have on our children's growth and development. Reading to our children creates the foundation for language and a love for literacy. This month, we will be working on sharing our love of books with the kiddos and encourage you to share your favorite stories with us.

If you have these stories at home, now is a great time to read them aloud and start having your child try to act out the story. Dramatic play is great for developing minds, and we are looking forward to costumes and seeing which stories each child likes best.



This is the time of year we usually begin preparing for our school play. Due to social distancing, the preschool teachers will be testing their skill as amateur videographers. Since it's new to us, we're sticking to material all of these kids are familiar with - nursery rhymes and songs! Rather than our usual spring play, we will be filming shorter segments of the kids as individuals and in groups to retell some of these old favorites (like Jack & Jill, Humpty Dumpty, and the Three Little Kittens). We are still going to be fundraising to the best of our abilities and would love any additional help for fundraising. Please just let Ms. Meg know you are interested in helping. If you are a business owner or know that your company would love to donate to Our School and our children, we would be honored.



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Benefits of reading to your children include but are not limited to:

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

From the moment a child is born, experiences begin to shape the brain's architecture (Farah, 2010). Research reveals that the brain develops most rapidly in the first several years of a child's life. Reading supports brain growth and development during the first eight (8) years of a child's life by offering a range of books that promote rich language input, a delivery method that reinforces a consistent book sharing routine, and parents to support developmentally appropriate expectations and responsiveness to the child's signals.

EARLY LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Reading begins long before children enter school, through a series of interactions that set the foundation for the skills necessary for reading success. Research shows that children who hear and are exposed to more and richer language are given the best chances to succeed academically and develop better language skills (Fernald, Marchman, & Weisleder, 2013). Sharing books and reading aloud to young children is not only one of the best activities to stimulate language and cognitive skills, it also builds motivation, curiosity, and memory (Bardige, 2009). To foster language and literacy development, children need to experience a variety of interactions, relationships, activities and play.

Reading promotes language and literacy development through the extensive selection of developmentally appropriate books that build the skills for vocabulary, imagination, and overall reading success. Reading helps children strengthen listening skills, hear language and rich vocabulary that is not part of everyday speech, and practice conversations in their home language.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Reading, compared to all other academic subjects, is the most sensitive to family influence and reading proficiency is the gateway to success in other academic areas. Research shows that the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for success in reading is when parents are involved in reading aloud to their children (Shumow, 2010).

Reading encourages family time and reinforces the development of home learning habits that are critical for school success by helping children associate the habit of reading with pleasure. The warmth that accompanies reading by a caring adult lasts beyond the experience. Parents have the confidence and strategies to create a literacy rich environment, regardless of families' language or literacy proficiency.

INTRINSIC READING MOTIVATION

All learning begins with an emotional context. Print motivation, or a child's interest in and enjoyment of books in the early years, develops into an intrinsic motivation to read as they enter school and begin reading on their own. Research suggests that individuals who become lifelong readers are those who are internally motivated to read (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Reading encourages families to participate in practical ways to help their children develop, promote, and foster the internal/intrinsic motivation to read. By rotating an average of 100 books into homes, children learn that books can be windows into new worlds and mirrors through which they can see themselves. In doing so, children are exposed to new ideas and are encouraged to further delve into topics that they want to know more about. Furthermore, when children are offered a choice of books to read, they will naturally choose what is of interest to them. The simple act of selecting one's own book increases a child's motivation.