

October 2017

Dear Parents,

What a joy it's been to become acquainted with and to work with your children!

During the **first six weeks**, and even beyond, our class spends time learning routines and behaviors through a process called "guided discovery." Each time a new center or

activity or material is introduced we discuss all the possible ways to use it, and how to take care of it. The children also learn where all the materials belong. We brainstorm all

kinds of "what-ifs" so children can make a thoughtful choice when a problem situation comes up. In this way everyone has the same information about our classroom which

keeps it running more smoothly as the kids begin to take more responsibility for its care.

Another process we do together is rule making. Together we brainstorm all the ways we need to behave to have a fun year learning together. Inevitably we end up with thirty or

more rules! Obviously we can't remember that many rules! So the next step is to group

similar rules together. These are the **5 rules** we made for our class constitution this year:

1. Treat others respectfully, the way you like to be treated. BE KIND:-)
2. Be safe and healthy.
3. Try hard and learn.
4. Do your jobs.
5. Have a positive attitude and say "o.k."

Next we discussed our plan for when students do not follow the group plan:

- Teacher says, "That's an unexpected behavior, please stop."
- Teacher directs child to "Regroup."

- Teacher may send email to suggest that parents have a “serious talk” at home with their child for some unexpected behaviors.
- Teacher may request that Mrs. Hutchins, our principal, talk with a child for some unexpected behaviors.

Friendship Problems:

- Student tell someone to “stop” a behavior that does not follow the group plan. If the child doesn’t stop the behavior, the other child may “walk away” or get assistance from an adult.

Practicing this kind of problem-solving at home may benefit your child. It gives them opportunities to learn how to use an assertive “voice,”and it helps them to articulate problems clearly.

In **math**, we have done a number (pun intended!) of fun activities! Everyone learned that graphs can tell us ‘how many.’ We graphed the month of our birthdays. We played a length comparison game, we learned number counting games and songs, and we learned to make growing and repeating patterns. We sorted many different manipulatives. The children have also made sets of each number, with a variety of materials. The children also delved into formal numeral writing. They practiced the strokes used to form numerals, and they will continue to use their “sky writers” to practice number and letter formation in the air with their fingers. Students also practice number writing in their penmanship books.

In **science** the children are learning all about weather conditions, temperature, and collecting data on charts and tables. They are learning to interpret data. They are learning how to talk about their observations and how to look for patterns in the weather and in the data. The students are learning all of these concepts and skills through a variety of activities, games, books, reflection and videos!

During **writing** time we are thinking, drawing and writing. The children are telling a story about

their picture. We have learned that the pictures match the words in all of our stories. We have begun to add letters and words to label items in our stories. It is exciting to see the stories developing within our classroom. Our writer's share time is our favorite time to learn and observe writing pieces of our classmates!

Our **literacy activities** include the very popular "special student of the day!" Each day a student's name is chosen. The "special student" leads the class in a name cheer. Then the special student's name is cut into letters. The special student unscrambles the letters to make his/her name again. The special student leads the class in counting the letters and clapping the syllables in his/her name. The children identify each letter and spell the name aloud in a variety of voices with a variety of movements. The final activity is to observe our special student very carefully. Every child in the class draws and illustrates a "detailed" picture of the special student. These drawings are made into a book which the special student takes home to keep! We hope you and your child enjoy their "special student" of the day book!

One of our literacy centers has been learning about the alphabet! We spend quite a bit of time making sure that we know the names of all of the upper and lower case letters. We are thinking about the sound that each letter makes. **Please be sure to spend some time with your child to help them learn the names of these letters and recognize both upper and lower case letters. Watch for the baggies with the letters in them and ask your child to sort them. Every letter has a name and a shape!** The alphabet is a foundational skill that helps us to

read. We are also learning all of the names of the students in our class as well as all of the letters in our own name! We are writing classmates names and building their names using letters or stamps. Another literacy center has been hearing rhyme and being able to tell if two words rhyme. This involves good listening and auditory discrimination skills. **Please take the time to read favorite nursery rhymes with your child! This is an easy way to teach rhyme while you are spending time reading together! Another fun activity is saying a word and see if your child can supply a word that rhymes!**

The children were introduced to one of our **ten kindergarten priority words**- "is." Our next priority word that we will learn is the word "the". They have been locating these words in our morning message. We are learning the difference between a word and a letter!

You may see stories or Scholastic **"Let's Find Out" magazines** come home with these words circled or underlined! In addition, you will see small folded "booklets" dedicated to each individual word! These priority words should be "mastered" both in reading and in writing by the end of the year! There is a priority word in the resource link on the website.

Practicing these words, both in reading and in writing, after they've been introduced at school (or before then, if your child is ready!) is a great way to pass a minute or two each day.

Let's Find Out magazines are provided to your child by our school. They provide wonderful opportunities for your child to read nonfiction articles, to experience many different kinds of texts and activities, and to allow your child to practice using his/her "reading finger." (pointer finger) Students may use their magazines during our literacy block rotations for a couple of weeks after they are introduced. Then, they will be sent home. Please take a moment to "reread" these paper magazines with your child when they arrive home! It

will allow for great rereading practice! You may also be interested in going to the scholastic website listed at the top of the magazine. Your child will find computer activities linked to the skills and concepts taught in each issue! Here is the link: www.scholastic.com/lfo Our classroom

Our kindergarten Halloween party will be on **Monday, October 30**. We will begin the festivities with a parade through kindergarten and the hallways of our school at 9:15. The party will take place from approximately 9:45-10:50. We will do crafts, play games, and have a healthy snack supplied by our cafeteria. Of course, we will all be dressed in our Halloween costumes! Please no weapons or really scary masks for our class party.

Thanks go out to Ellie's mom, Hillary, for agreeing to be our **room parent and volunteer coordinator**. She will coordinate all of our volunteer needs, including communications, request supplies for our classroom and we hope she will wash our reusable dishes after classroom parties, to keep our school "green." Thanks for taking on these important roles Hillary!

We are hoping that we can recruit a few more of you to **volunteer** in our classroom! Please contact Hillary, our volunteer coordinator, if you can spare some time to assist:

hilliej729@yahoo.com

Our children have been introduced to our "**quality work**" **guidelines**. We help children learn **self-assessment** by having them ask themselves, "Is my work as colorful as a rainbow, as detailed as a newspaper, and as careful as holding a baby?" Children are asked to show how they feel they've done toward work completion, focusing, producing

quality work, etc.with a thumbs up, thumbs down, or thumbs to the side. This informal self-assessment guides children toward learning important independent work and study Skills.

Thanks for your contributions to our classroom. “**Helping Hands**” will be posted in newsletters and next to the classroom door as we need more items. We are off to a great start!

Remember to check yorkschoools.org/ves and go to staff, then Jen Ellis/Melinda Gallagher, to access our class **webpage**!

Thank you for attending our **Open House**! It was a joy to share our extensive classroom information with all of you!

Fondly,

Jen and Melinda

Dates to Remember:

Friday, 10/6 No School/Teacher Inservice Day

Monday, 10/9 No School/Columbus Day

White Pines field trip Ellis/Gallagher: Friday, 10/20 (layers of clothing and comfortable hiking sneakers/boots required)

Monday, 10/30 Halloween party, wear costume to school, recyclable/canvas grocery bag for costume, change of clothes School wide parade 9:15-9:30

Friday, 11/10 Veteran’s Day (no school)

Monday, 11/20 (Students DO have school!) After school and evening Parent-

Teacher conferences (K. students do not attend conferences.)

Tuesday, 11/21 Parent-Teacher conferences (No School for students, K. students do not attend conferences)

Spring Parent-Teacher conferences (K. students do not attend conferences.)
(Please put these dates on your calendars!):

Monday, April 9, Tuesday, April 10, and Wednesday, April 11 after school hours.