



The Kindergarten News

September 14, 2007

Handwriting Without Tears

In lower school, all students are taught to print using the Handwriting Without Tears (HWT) format. HWT is a simple, developmentally-based curriculum for writing readiness. Lessons are taught in a multi-sensory approach allowing time for visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic learning styles.

In the classroom students will construct each letter by using wooden pieces made into different curves and lines. Students will soon learn that all uppercase and lowercase letters can be made through a combination of little or big lines and little or big curves. Students will then use chalk boards and white boards to practice correct letter formations focusing on beginning each letter at the top of the line and moving down. Students will also have their own HWT workbook to reinforce these concepts and provide pencil and paper practice.

During our handwriting time we will also involve the students in motor activities to strengthen and fine tune their developing motor control. See the attachment for a copy of the HWT letter formation chart. We will begin our lessons with the uppercase letters before moving to the lowercase. Feel free to review these letter formations at home, encouraging your child to start each letter at the top of the line.

More information on this program can be found at www.hwtears.com.

Logical Consequences: Practicing Making Amends

The first six weeks of kindergarten provide many opportunities for teachers to reinforce the classroom rules and expectations through practice and modeling of expected behaviors. Our Responsive Classroom approach to teaching and learning utilizes logical consequences as a powerful way of responding to children's misbehavior. Logical consequences are respectful of children and help them to take responsibility for their actions.

Take a break is one logical consequence that was shared last week. Other logical consequences include "loss of privilege" and "you-break-it, you-fix it." In each kindergarten classroom, teachers are engaging children in discussions around what to do when our actions hurt others. These gestures that we offer others who are hurt are referred to as Apology of Actions. During the next few weeks, children will generate ideas that will lead to the creation of a list of options that often include choices such as:

- ◆ If you break it, offer to fix it
- ◆ Draw a nice picture
- ◆ Ask for a special recess playdate
- ◆ Give a gentle hug

When social issues arise, students may visit the Apology of Action charts to help them make decisions about reparation. Children develop a greater sense of empathy and understanding of others when they are able to hear how their behavior has affected someone else and what is needed to mend the hurt feelings. Throughout the year, children will add ideas to our Apology of Action menu of choices. The intention of logical consequences like Apology of Action is to help children develop internal controls and to learn from their mistakes in a supportive atmosphere.

Important Dates:

- ◆ September 14: Kindergarten Parent Education Evening
Time: 5:00 pm-6:00 pm
Location: Gordon Multipurpose Room)

Childcare for kindergarten students and school-age siblings is available through AFTER-SCHOOL for Parent Education Evenings. Please email Beckie Stokes to reserve a space(bstokes@usn.org).

- ◆ **CHECK www.usn.org, E news** for more school-wide information.