

Kindergarten Update - November 13, 2009

Here's a good word for today: paraskavedekatriaphobia. No, that's not one of the Kindergarten sight words - it's a word that means "fear of Friday the 13th"! We don't have that in Kindergarten - all Fridays are good days for fun and learning.

I've had one day of conferences so far, with 2 more to come: November 18 and December 2. I am enjoying talking about all the children's accomplishments in only 3 short months of Kindergarten! Several people asked me for extra things they could do with their children at home, especially those children who have older siblings doing homework. I am pulling together some packets of math games and handwriting, and will send those home before Thanksgiving. It will be purely voluntary; some parents like to save them for long car rides, or waiting time at the doctor's office.

We started our science unit on Sand this week. The young scientists explored a variety of sands from different places: Bermuda, St. Maarten, Hawaii, Florida, and Cape Cod. (If your family is traveling to any exotic beaches over vacation, I'd love to have more sand samples!). They used magnifiers to look at the grains, and they made observational drawings of what they noticed. They compared sand grains to other grains, like sea salt, poppy seeds, and flax meal. They also compared the properties of wet, damp, and dry sand, and learned a song about erosion. The children loved the hands-on exploration of a medium they know so well.

We also visited the computer lab last week. The goal was to teach the children how to sign in, and use one of our math programs called "Shapes." Here are some things your children can practice on your home computer (supervised, of course): getting familiar with the keyboard by typing their first and last name, using a mouse to point and click, and click & drag, and use of the backspace and space bar keys. The way we log in to the school computers is: first name, space, last name; then the password is a lower case k. Their name is in lower case, too. The children find the space bar tricky, and often hit it too many times. The same for the letters in their names; they get strings of the same letter because they don't yet have the fine motor skills to tap lightly just once on a key. While we don't want Kindergartners playing for hours on the computer, a few practice sessions in a word document with a parent will be very helpful.

Next week, we will begin our mapping unit (part of our social studies curriculum). The children will learn about maps and directionality, and make maps of the school, and their bedrooms at home. We will also do a mapping walk on Wednesday. On this walking field trip the children will explore the area around Nixon, Codman Drive, and Featherland park, and then map the route when they get back to the classroom. We will go no matter what the weather, so please be sure your child has appropriate outerwear for the day. The only reason we would not go is if there were a true downpour of rain, but a little drizzle is not going to stop us.

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Each child needs to bring a shoe box next week, by Friday. We will be using them to make 3-D maps of their bedrooms. Thanks!

I look forward to continuing conferences next week. Have a great weekend!

Ellie Garvey