

First Grade Curricular Summary and Academic Expectations

Second Quarter (Beginning of Nov - Mid January)

Dear Parents,

As report cards approach, I thought it would be helpful for you to have a description of the curricular and academic expectations I have for your child as we end the second quarter of first grade. This document is designed to give you an idea of how the average student should be performing at this time of year. I will be using these benchmarks to evaluate your child as I write report cards. We will have a chance to discuss any concerns you may have about these issues at our parent teacher conferences.

Reading

First grade reading is traditionally organized into three levels: pre-primer, primer, and first grade. Pre-primer is the level that children are expected to master by December. In accordance with this, by the end of November in first grade, I expect your child to:

- have learned around 80% of the pre-primer sight words.
- know all of the letter / sound relationships for each letter and be able to apply them to "sound out" short, 3-4 letter words with regular spelling, such as "cat" or "must." Your children should sound these words out smoothly, not leaving out any sounds, and saying the sounds all the way to the end.
- be able to match the sounds they decode to a word they know that makes sense with the story.

Putting these three areas, sight words, phonics, and comprehension together develop a balanced approach to reading.

Writing

There are two main areas of writing in which I assess the children: composition/mechanics and ideas.

- In the area of **composition**, I expect your child to be writing 3 to 5 sentences during each writing session which stay on topic, have a solid beginning, and include at least one supporting detail or opinion.
- In the area of **mechanics**, your child should have begun experimenting with the use of capitals and periods to start and finish their sentences, but I do not expect consistently correct usage at this stage. I expect them to be writing their words and stories in the correct direction and leave spaces between their words.

- I may also comment on your child's attitude towards writing and their productivity during our writing periods, as over time these factors directly impact their success in this important area of communication.
- In the area of **ideas**, your child should be able to usually think of their own ideas for writing rather than asking me to generate one.

Spelling

In the second term of first grade, I use spelling as a method for children to practice, use, and become secure in letter sound relationships. I also look for them to begin to develop sight vocabularies in spelling. This process will take longer than developing sight vocabulary in reading, and I do not expect children to correctly spell words that they may be able to read on sight.

- If your child is using only a couple of sounds for each word, we call them a *semi-phonetic* speller. For example, a *semi-phonetic* speller may write the word "united" as "ud" while a *phonetic* speller would write it as "unt'd" or.
- **At this time in the year, your child should be a *phonetic/transitional* speller, which means that they should at least write a letter for each sound in the word they are attempting to write.** In the next stage, *transitional*, children begin to experiment with and apply spelling patterns that they recall from reading. A *transitional* speller may spell the above word "youknighted."
- It is at this stage that they are ready to learn the *conventional* spelling of the word since they are developing a visual understanding of it. Your children should move into the *transitional* phase with some words around January if they haven't gotten there already.

Handwriting

By the second term, we have learned how to correctly form all the lower case letters of the English alphabet. We have also discussed proportions of letters, making the tall ones tall and the short ones short as well as correct pencil grip.

- At this time of year, I expect your child to be writing lower case letters with correct formation, correct pencil grip, and using the guidelines to keep them in correct proportion. As handwriting skills develop, your children's handwriting will become smaller and more consistent. At this time, your children's handwriting may be larger than the lines we use in class, which is fine as long as we can see that they are aware of the proportions in letters and are coming closer to the space provided.

Mathematics

Our Math program focuses on skills and conceptual understanding in the areas of counting (especially from 0 to 1000 and above), number understanding and counting small change (pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters).

- By the end of second term, I expect your child to have a secure grasp of numbers to 100, skip counting by 2's, 5's, and 10's to 50, writing 2 digit numbers to 99, identifying numbers that come before or after to 30, using tally marks, and filling in missing numbers in a sequence. Your child should be *secure* in all the above skills and concepts to be meeting expectations in mathematics.
- We have also begun *developing* addition and subtraction skills with regrouping.