



Corbitt Connection

November 30, 2009



Holiday Season

Welcome back! I hope that everyone had a great Thanksgiving. With the holiday season just around the corner excitement is building more and more each day. I am excited too; I already have my Christmas tree up at home and have begun planning for the hustle and bustle of our break. However, I want to encourage you to try and keep your child's routine as close to "normal" as you can. Bedtimes and balanced meals are especially important during this high excitement time. Over the next three weeks (yes, that's all there is until winter break) some of the things that we will be working on include: completing our Procedural (How to . . .) Writing genre study, taking a *Patterns* test in math, completing mid-year DRAs-to gauge your child's reading growth, and taking the mid-year Math Diagnostic, Skills assessments such as Word Wall and calendar quizzes just to name a few. This is why even though it may be difficult for you; it is so critical that you try to keep your child's routine as close to "normal" as possible. As always, thank you for your continued support.

"What Can I Do at Home?"

This week I am continuing to share ideas with you from, *The 10 Best Ways to Help Your 1st-Grader Succeed in School, A parent's to-do list*, by Ann E. La Forge. This week's tip is to "spend time in your child's classroom." Our spelling tests on Fridays are a great way for you to come in and help out. I will be making plans for our holiday party and will need help at that time too. (More details coming soon regarding our party.) Also, if you have a special talent or interest please let me know I would love to utilize your talents and time. ☺

Writer's Workshop Update

We will be finishing up Procedural writing soon-before Christmas break. This week the main focus will be on adding "voice" (our own personal style to our writing) and creating our rubric.

Reader's Workshop Update

We will continue to "read . . . instructions" as we look for the better words we will see how we can incorporate them into our writing. This will be another way to express our "voice."

Skills Block

This week spelling is back with the short "e." It is critical that you help your child because many times the way we pronounce our words can be difficult to discriminate between short "i" and short "e."

Math Workshop Update

This week we will continue our *Quilt Squares and Block Towns* unit. We will be observing, describing, and comparing 2-D shapes. The descriptions will include the attributes of the shapes (e.g. number of sides, corners, etc . . .).

Homework

It's back! Please be sure to complete and return ALL of the homework on Friday.

Important Dates to Remember

Tomorrow	Library-Books are Due
December 4	Homework Due/Spelling Test
December 9	Early Dismissal @ 1: 45 p.m.
December 11	Zoo Field Trip ☺

Spend time in your child's classroom

Even if it's only once a year and you have to take a half-day off from work to do it. All children get a real thrill when they see their parent in their classroom. It sends a powerful message that you care about your child, and about her education.

Seeing the classroom firsthand is also the best way for you to get a perspective on what and how the teacher is teaching, what kinds of challenges the teacher is facing, what the class chemistry is, how your child fits in within the group, and how she interacts with specific peers. Plus, it will give you a better idea of the kinds of questions you should ask to draw your child out when talking about school.

In most schools, you don't need an excuse to visit the classroom. Just ask the teacher if you can come in and observe. If you want an excuse, volunteer. Teachers are always looking for parents to:

- Share expertise in a particular subject area related to your job or hobbies
- Read to children
- Conduct writing workshops, or help children "publish" their books
- Tutor kids who need extra help, or work with a small group of advanced students in math or other subjects
- Chaperone field trips
- Sew costumes for a school play, bake cupcakes for a party, or cut out paper shapes for a class project
- Type up a classroom newsletter or literary magazine

If you have lots of time to give, you might consider:

- Being a "class parent" (the person who acts as a liaison between the teacher and the other parents — rounding up chaperones for school trips, for instance, or finding volunteers to bake for the class bake sales)
- Being a playground monitor
- Joining the school's parent/teacher association
- Joining the principal's school advisory committee (if there is one)
- Running for your local school board

At the very least, you should plan to make time to attend:

- Special events to which parents are invited (a Mother's Day brunch, prepared by the children, for instance; or a Writer's Tea, at which children read their stories aloud to their parents)
- Special school events, such as the annual Holiday Show or Spring Musical
- The school's annual open house
- All of the scheduled parent/teacher conferences