



Corbitt Connection

December 7, 2009



Zoo Trip

Our field trip has finally (almost) arrived. This Friday we will be going to the zoo! I ask that you please watch the weather, as a "cold snap" does not usually come with too much warning. For ease and space I am also asking that you please send your child's lunch in a disposable container, e.g. brown bag, grocery bag, ziplock bag that is labeled with your child's name. (Lunch boxes take up too much room in the cooler.) Thank you.

Progress Reports

Friday your child brought home his/her progress report for the 2nd nine weeks. Please be sure to sign and return one copy of your child's progress report as soon as possible. If you are interested in scheduling a conference with me please let me know of a day and time that is convenient for you and I will do my best to accommodate you. As always, thank you for your support at home!

Party News

I have been busy planning the details of our Christmas party. Please see the additional letter, which contains more information on our "Winter Wonderland Workshop" and *Polar Express* Party.

"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 "encourage responsibility and independence." This is especially critical, as your child is getting older. The more that you allow your child to take responsibility the more responsible he/she will ultimately become.

Writer's Workshop Update

We will be finishing up Procedural writing this week. The students will get a chance to polish their how to's on special paper and "grade" it against our class rubric.

Reader's Workshop Update

We will take this week and next to read a variety of seasonal books and work on comprehension strategies. It is critical to remember, "Reading is not just word identification, but word identification is a part of reading" (Cowen, 2002 p. 4).

Skills Block

This week the students will take their last spelling test of 2009. However, due to Friday's field trip the test will be on THURSDAY. Please be sure to help your child study so that he/she is ready for this Thursday's spelling test.

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 STUDENTS WILL USE THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE SHAPES' ATTRIBUTES TO SORT AND DEFINE CATEGORIES OF THOSE SHAPES.

Important Dates to Remember

December 9	Early Dismissal @ 1: 45 p.m.
December 10	Bonus P.E. Spelling Test!
December 11	Zoo Field Trip ☺
December 15	Winter Wonderland Workshop
December 16	<i>Polar Express</i> Day
Dec. 17-Jan. 3	Winter Break-Have a great holiday ☺

Encourage responsibility and independence

Both of these are essential to independent learning. And both will make it easier for your child to adjust to the demands of school, and get along with his teacher and classmates. So, whenever possible let your child do things for himself — and for others.

For example, encourage him to:

- Play an active role in getting ready for school. That includes picking out school clothes (preferably the night before), getting up on time (using an alarm clock, if necessary), getting dressed, washing up and brushing his teeth, getting his own breakfast ready, making up his bed, and checking to make sure he has everything he needs in his backpack. Once your child is physically capable of doing these things, let him take charge. If necessary, make him a checklist to help him remember everything that needs to be done.
- Develop a homework routine. While there's no set formula, it will help if your child has a regular time and place to do her homework each day. That way she's less likely to forget to do it, and less likely to fight about doing it "later on."
- Unpack his own backpack. Teach him that as soon as he gets home from school, he should unpack his backpack, put his homework materials in his homework place, and hand you (or put in a special place) any newsletters, notes from the teacher, papers to sign, or special work he's brought home. *Then* he can watch TV, or have his snack, or do whatever else is planned.

If you make this part of a daily routine, you're less likely to be hit during the morning rush with, "Oh, no! I'm supposed to bring in cupcakes for the party today" or "Today's the day you're supposed to come to school for our science fair."

- Pick up her own mess. That includes toys scattered on the living room floor, bikes, and roller skates left out on the driveway, and wet towels left cold and lonely on the bathroom floor. It may take longer and require more effort for you to insist that your child pick things up herself, but in the long run it's better for her than having you always do it. In school, she won't have a choice.
- Get involved in family meals. Young children can set the table or help with the grocery list.
- Perform regular chores that benefit the entire family. Even little things like taking out the trash regularly will help your child see herself as part of a larger family team. It will also build her sense of competence and confidence.