



Goosehill Primary School

Weekly Notes-January 13, 2017



Dear Parents,

One of the primary goals of instruction in kindergarten and first grade is to develop our students' literacy skills. The ability to **read and express ideas in writing** is integral to their success in all areas. The NYS Common Core Learning Standards represent high expectations for achievement in K-12 English Language Arts and our teachers provide enriching instruction every day to ensure that our students achieve at high levels.

In order to support your efforts to help your child grow as a reader, I will be conducting a workshop for parents on **Wednesday (1/18) at 9:30** on how specific literacy skills can be fostered at home. (This workshop was scheduled for this past week's GPFA meeting, but had to be rescheduled.) I will share simple ways to develop the foundational skills for decoding words, how to enhance vocabulary and reading comprehension skills by reading aloud to your child, and how to help your child develop a love of reading. Here are some of the ideas we will discuss:

- Children need to develop the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words in order to be able to read and write. Parents can support their children's ability to do this by reading **nursery rhymes and poetry** to them. Rhyming games and tongue twisters also help children hear the sounds in words.
- Beginning readers are not able to "sound out" many of the words they encounter in grade level books. Kindergarten and first grade readers need to learn a variety of strategies to be able to read unknown words. For example, they are *expected* to use the sounds of the first letter (or first few letters) along with the PICTURES to help them when they encounter an unknown word. This is one of many strategies all beginning readers use as they continue to develop strong decoding skills.
- When parents listen to their children read aloud, it is important for them **NOT** to jump in to correct their mistakes. Instead, parents should simply say, "**Did that sound right?**" or "**Did that make sense?**" In this way, parents will help children develop an important reading skill: the ability to self-monitor and self-correct.
- All children need to derive **pleasure** from reading. When a reader struggles over many words in a text, it becomes a chore to read. Readers need to read lots of "comfortable" books to develop their capacity to read fluently and with comprehension. Pushing readers to read "harder" books may actually cause them to develop bad habits, such as focusing solely on getting the words right without understanding the story or information they're reading.
- Finally, parents have the power to positively influence their children's development in reading by **reading aloud to them on a regular basis**. By modeling specific strategies while reading aloud to children, parents can support the development of high level reading comprehension skills.

I look forward to a great discussion on Wednesday morning. I hope you'll join us!

Warm regards,

Lynn Herschlein

