

Cabin Fever



October 2011

We have had a great start to the school year. The students are a group of very special children. As a teacher you don't often get a class like this group. They have taken ownership of the classroom rules and routines really quickly. They show incredible respect for each other and our workspace. They are very conscious to try their best and work to their greatest potential. I am thoroughly enjoying my days with your children as they are delightful.

With many of the students having been in a classroom where Daily 5 was practiced last year, I am finding that it has been easy for the children to continue from where they left off in their literacy goals. They are also stronger at stamina, taking ownership of their learning and following the routines of Daily 5. The children have been assessed to determine both their reading fluency and comprehension levels and have also completed spelling and writing assessments. The time we spent in September completing these assessments has helped your child and I conference to determine specific strategies to improve in literacy. It has also helped me to develop a plan for teaching to their specific and individual interests, strengths and weaknesses. The children should be reading a minimum of 15 minutes each night. I am encouraging them to bring what they are reading at home into school and vice versa. I want them to become voracious readers; meaning that they find something that they enjoy reading and have trouble putting down. Strong readers feel this way about books. For most children in Grade 3 and 4 who have not yet developed this connection to reading it is simply that they have not yet found a genre or series that has hooked them onto reading for pleasure. Reading improves all areas of literacy: spelling, writing and oral communication.



In mathematics this month our focus will be on numeration, specifically the understanding of numbers and place value. A parent letter is attached to this newsletter explaining the expectations of the numeration unit and how you can help your child at home. I continue to encourage your child to access the Nelson Mathematics website to practice the concepts that we are learning in class. We are closely following the textbook and online there are multiple choice questions which check for understanding of each lesson for each chapter. This is a great way to confirm understanding of what has been taught in class. The textbook is also fantastic as the lessons, with examples are clearly demonstrated on one side of the page and practice questions are on the other page. In learning to work in a textbook the

children are also learning how to organize a page and present learning on open lined paper. This is a very difficult skill for some students and I will continue to be insistent on how their daily work is presented as these habits are important to put in place now as they will be vital for success in the future.

In the other subject areas we are learning the content of each course through exploration, creativity and critical thinking.

In Social Studies we have just taken off on a road trip across Canada to learn about urban and rural communities (grade 3) and Canada's provinces and territories (grade 4).

In Science with Mrs. Mojeski the Grade 4 students are learning about Rocks and Minerals. The Grade 3 students, with Mrs. Pyper-Coombs are finishing their unit on soil and will have a test on Friday.

Mrs. Pyper-Coombs also teaches all the students Drama and Dance and the children are learning about different types of dances.

My art lessons primarily focus on an artist and their style and elements used in creating their famous pieces of work. I also like to connect Social Studies into art. In our last class we learned about how the animals found on the Pacific Coast were the inspiration of the West Coast Aboriginal Peoples and how they used a type of pointillism in their art creations to express their love for the land. We created very vivid pieces of art using paper tearing techniques, paint and the end of pencils. The children's art pieces will be placed into an Art Portfolio which they will bring home at the end of the year. (If you ever want to see any of their creations they are welcome to bring home their portfolios any time. Just please return them.)

In the gym we are playing cooperative games and will soon move on to volleyball skills. Gym shoes are required and some children are coming unprepared for class. The gym days are marked on the schedule in the front of the agenda. In health we are learning about healthy eating and body image.

We will begin learning the recorder this month in music. The children are welcome to bring home their recorders to share what we are learning.

REMEMBER- The BIG IDEA in the Cabin this year is Be Responsible for the Energy You Bring to this Space. Your children are certainly showing that they are responsible members of our classroom community.

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to come in, call or contact me via e-mail. Communication is key to our teamwork and success this year. I am looking forward to this month in The Cabin.

Sincerely,
Kara Baranoski

