

An illustration featuring two brown bears and a ladybug. One bear is larger and smiling, wearing a green and purple striped shirt. A smaller bear is peeking over its shoulder. A ladybug is positioned below the bears. The entire scene is enclosed in a hand-drawn purple border with small black dots at the corners.

Second Grade News

October/November 2011

Dear Parents,

We're off and running in Second Grade. Parent Conferences are scheduled during the week of October 10-14. Be sure to double check your scheduled time. We look forward to meeting with you and planning a successful year for your child.

Each month, students in first and second grade will be focusing on a specific character trait. The focus for the month of October is Responsibility. Students participate in a variety of classroom activities designed to reinforce and develop this characteristic. For example, we might read books about ways one can demonstrate responsibility, students will also write about what responsibility means to them and teachers will recognize and reward students in their classrooms for behaving in responsible ways. In second grade responsibility means being trustworthy, being reliable, completing an obligation, accepting your share of the work that needs to be done, and accepting responsibility for your mistakes. Our November character trait will be self-discipline. Self-discipline means practicing self-control, setting long range goals and achieving them, and making good choices. Please review the theme definitions so that you can help reinforce the monthly character trait with your child at home.

During math instruction, we have been discussing and exploring addition and subtraction concepts, learning about "Break-Apart Numbers," and understanding equations and inequalities. Our math series includes very advanced concepts and many "hands on" lessons for students. The children are very engaged in the math lessons. Please be sure to read and review the "Family Letters" that come home with your child from our math series. These letters explain what the children are learning and how you can help your child at home. Many of the homework assignments reflect information reviewed in the "Family Letter".

HOMework

We have had some parents ask questions about the concept of "Extra Credit Homework". Perhaps others have been wondering about this as well. In second grade, we would like to discourage "extra credit"; rather, we would like the focus to be on producing higher quality work. For example, if the assignment is to write a sentence, and you or your child wishes to go beyond the assignment, your child could write a paragraph or a sentence that includes several descriptive words or phrases. We have found that this philosophy helps children to improve the quality of their daily class work as well, as they begin to realize that more is not necessarily better.

Please remember to read the homework directions to your child. We noticed some incomplete assignments when checking the first homework contract. Sometimes it appeared that parts of the directions had been

overlooked. Children in second grade do need parental help with homework. The children should be able to complete the assignments independently or with little help from you, since we review all directions for nightly homework on Monday. Also, please remember the homework rules that state that all work must be done in pencil, unless otherwise stated, and all assignments should be completed neatly.

Also, we would appreciate it if you could be sure that **the work is stapled in the order it is assigned AND labeled with the day of the week assigned**. If you don't have a stapler at home, send the work paper clipped and your child can staple the packet together at school prior to turning it in. **Your signature at the end of the contract indicates that your child has read for approximately 15 minutes, that you have checked the attached work, and that the work attached is correct and complete.**

A point of clarification: student **writing** should be the student's actual work. We would appreciate if you would help your child to correct the spelling of "high frequency words" (words that occur frequently in writing, such as about/because/there/often/which). Also, please be sure that the sentences are complete sentences, begin with a capital letter, and include ending punctuation. All spelling does not need to be correct. **Math**, however, should be corrected by a parent so that students receive immediate feedback about the correctness of their answers.

As the year progresses, we appreciate your support in helping your child develop responsibility with homework, library books, and coming to school on time, rested and ready to learn!

Sincerely,

The Second Grade Teachers