

SNEAK PEAK

Dear Families,

Occasionally I send a letter home explaining what we will be doing in class. This particular letter touches a little on Writing and Science. I will focus on different subjects throughout the year.

Writing: The school year has only just begun, and I am learning more each day from your children! I want to take this opportunity to tell you about writing time in our classroom. As you know, writing is one of the basic subjects in elementary school. Its importance continues to grow as standardized tests, colleges, and employers demand writing samples as evidence of one's ability to communicate effectively. When you visit our classroom, you'll notice that we set aside time every day for writing. We refer to our writing time as **Writing Workshop** because that's a term published author's use. It makes sense to borrow their term because the children will follow a writing process used by published authors of novels, poems, short stories, essays, and articles. Throughout this first month or so of school, your children will be writing personal narratives, which are true stories from their lives. This unit is meant not only to teach them qualities of good personal narrative writing, but it's also designed to help them develop stamina, focus, structure, detail, a sense of purpose, and an enthusiasm for writing. You may wonder how you can help your child to prosper as a writer this year. The first thing I want to remind you is that for most of us, writing can be frightening. Please encourage your child by helping your child realize that daily life brims with stories that deserve to be told. When your family hears a noise behind the wall and you use a flashlight to find that the noise comes from a squirrel who has been living there, remind your child that this would make a great entry in his or her writer's notebook! When you get the chance to see some of your child's writing, for now, it would really help if you give that child what every writer needs above all: an interested, appreciative reader. Read the child's writing not as a judge, but as a reader, paying attention to the content. If you do this, you will make your child feel like an author, and you'll make it much more likely that your child will care about writing and will be ready to invest in the hard work required to grow as a writer.

Science: Our class is beginning a new science unit, the **FOSS Variables Module**. We will be learning how scientists use critical thinking, careful observation, and measurement to conduct experiments. The big ideas in this model are *system* and *variable*. Any collection of objects that is working together we identify as a system. The system that your child has already started involves pendulums. In the system the interacting parts influence how the whole system behaves or performs. If a part of the system can change, those parts are called variables. An understanding of the idea of variable and the ability to identify and control variables are the cornerstone of scientific experimentation. Not to mention will help with their Science Fair Project later in the year.

We are partners in this incredibly important work of helping your child become a strong and confident learner. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me. I look forward to our ongoing communication through the "Speak Peak".