



Dear Families,

May 2018

Well, here it is, the end of another school year. Teachers get to this time of year and wonder where the time went. We lament over all the ideas and activities that never came to be, celebrate the many successes and reflect on the countless rewarding moments that happened all year. We give one last hug and then watch 'our children' leave our care. For some, we are only saying good-bye for the summer, before they return to us next school year, while others will pursue a lifetime of new adventures and experiences elsewhere.

We learned so much from having your children in class, helping them through their struggles, guiding them through new experiences, encouraging them to try new things.

We also learned from you, through your questions, comments, and suggestions.

We greatly appreciated all of your smiles, your patience and your generous volunteerism.

Our classroom has become emptier as we pack things away. Just as we introduced the children to the classroom in September by filling it gradually, so we tried to help the children adjust to 'closure' by doing some of our packing under their watchful eyes.

Some of you have asked about your child's readiness for kindergarten and we have already discussed your specific situation. Your child's new teacher will start at the point from where your child is in September. However, **here are a few ideas you can work on during the summer:**

- Read together every day and add snuggle time to your reading as often as possible. This is probably the most important thing you can do for your child's school success. Have him/her also practice sitting comfortably and quietly, both on the floor and on a chair while they listen. If they only listen to stories while lounging, it becomes more challenging to sit 'attentively' in a group situation at school. And, when your children begin to read words on their own, have them read to you! The time will be just as enjoyable and just as valuable to their success.
- Point out letters and their sounds wherever you go. For example, point to the letters on a STOP sign and sound out the word. Count anything and everything: socks as you sort laundry, silverware as you set the table, seat belts for each person in the car, etc. Anything you do to help your child recognize similarities and differences in items will help with letter and numeral recognition. It doesn't matter if you do this with socks or fish or trees or toys, just observe and talk with each other. Discuss how things are alike or different. Everyday life is full of teachable moments. Make use of them as often as possible.

- Screen-time will be an important skill in your child's life, but it's also important to limit their time engaged in these activities. While they may be a whiz at computer-generated puzzles, they may struggle with hands-on problem-solving. The same is true for every other real-life skill that is duplicated on a screen. Be sure your child has many opportunities to manipulate and use real objects, as well.
- Without nagging, try to help your child remember to put away the object in their hand, *before* moving on to something else, instead of dropping it on the floor as their attention was attracted elsewhere. The goal is to have them realize that the current item needs to be cared for, *before* switching to another.
- Practice walking conscientiously. By this, I mean, help your child to slow down and really think about *where* he is walking and *how* he is walking. I know this sounds easy, but young children are easily distracted while moving from place to place and/or they are so eager to get to where they are going, they charge ahead without paying attention to what they are doing. The result is that they step on things (like books and puzzles and new plants), bump into things (like doorways and each other), or rush at things (while spilling the remaining water in their cup). Help your child to pay attention to what he/she is doing. Practice walking *safely* up and down stairs. That's easy for those of you with staircases at home, but not all houses are built that way.
- These are not kindergarten-specific skills, simply good ones to learn.

We end this year with hearts full of gratitude for all of you. Your conversations, strengths and struggles filled our days. We might not make the history books, but we tried to make a difference in our little corner of the world. All of us at St. Luke's Preschool hope that we have made a difference in your child's life, and maybe in yours, as well. And don't forget how much we will miss all of you. Please stay in touch!

Appreciatively yours,

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