

Irrawaddy Inquirer

"ONCE A WADDLE, ALWAYS A WADDLE"

From Mrs. Ritter and Ms. Vallecorse

April 2016

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REMINDER: When emailing with the teachers, please make sure to add both of them into the email.

Important Dates

- 4/7 - Spring Picture Day
- 4/10 - CSA Spirit Wear day
- 4/13-4/17 - Book Fair! (Located in the new gallery area of CSA)
- 4/17 - Mother/Son dance
- 4/18 - Daddy/Daughter dance
- 4/22 - Earth Day Spirit Wear Day
- 4/23-4/24 - NO SCHOOL for students- Spring Comprehensive Student Review
- 4/30 - Evening CSRs
- 5/4 - Irrawaddy Field Trip to Creature Conservancy



Upcoming Learning Targets

Reading: Readers will continue to wrap up our unit on wondering and asking questions about a text. Following that unit, readers will have a chance to dig deep into analyzing characters, comparing texts, looking for patterns in texts, and comparing points of view. This will be done by reading some classic fairy-tale stories as well as fractured versions of the classic tale (ex. Goldilocks and the Three Bears vs. Goatilocks and the Three Bears). As we work through this unit, focus will shift to working on putting learning and character analysis into action by role-playing, and working on using text clues to bring characters to life.

Writing: Our writers will explore the genre of poetry in our upcoming writing unit. Through the course of this unit, writers will work on writing poems about a variety of topics and possibly different styles. They'll get to experience partner and independent writing opportunities. Writers will work on coming up with descriptive language and explore a bit of figurative language that poets often use. We can't wait to see what they work to publish!

Math: After wrapping up our unit in data and graphing before Spring Break, students will move back into addition and subtraction strategies as well as computation practice. Our more emergent mathematicians will focus on mental math strategies by adding and subtracting tens mentally. Our more developing mathematicians will work toward triple digit regrouping with addition, while continuing to review and practice subtraction with regrouping. As we wrap up these units, we will begin to explore time concepts.



Comprehensive Student Reviews

It's that time again to schedule your Comprehensive Student Review! We are so eager to sit down with you and discuss your child's progress thus far this year! Join us for our spring Comprehensive Student Reviews on Thursday, April 23 and Friday, April 24.

Comprehensive Student Reviews (CSRs) consist of teachers and parents sitting down to discuss your child as a whole child (academic, intellectual, social/emotional, physical, and character/moral). We value these times together as we learn a great deal of information and it helps to shape our teaching, instruction, and interaction with each of our students. We usually send out a pre-conference form that we ask you to fill out and return. This greatly helps us to shape our conversation and to also gather any resources that may be helpful as we share insights and observations together.

CSRs will be held Thursday, April 23 and Friday, April 24 all day. There will be **NO SCHOOL** for students on these days.

On Thursday, April 30th, we will be holding our evening CSRs as well.

We will utilize signupgenius.com for our scheduling and we may include some additional days to meet. A link to that sign up will come out soon. If you have trouble signing up, email both teachers, and we can help!

Mother Son, Daddy Daughter Dance

The theme for this year's dances will be a Hollywood theme! The date of the Mother/Son dance is Friday, April 17th from 6:00-8:00 pm. The date of the Daddy/Daughter dance will be on Saturday, April 18th from 6:00-8:00 pm. Save the date(s) and be on the lookout for flyers from Parent Council to sign up.

April Choice Board

In your student's Tuesday folder, you will see the April Learning Extension Choice Board. Remember that this is an optional activity board, but is designed to facilitate and support learning at home by making fun and real-world connections to what we'll be working on in the classroom. Each box can be completed more than once, adjusted to fit your learner's needs and the level they are personally working at as necessary. Students are welcome to send in any completed work items to share and the checked off choice board can be returned at the end of the month. Have fun!

Extra Clothes

We're so glad to have spring in the air and more nice days ahead. We saw lots of melty and muddy days last month. While the melting may be over and done with, April showers may be on the way and muddy areas may still dot the playground. We want our learners to be outside as much as possible during recess times but we don't want too many muddy mishaps as we saw last month. Our extra supply of clothes dwindled as each week went on, we'd hate to see our spares depleted and students feeling uncomfortable for the remainder of the day following recess. It might be a good idea to send your learner with a change of clothes (even just pants/socks) to keep in their backpack or locker in case of any muddy mishaps or puddle jumps during recess. Be sure to label anything sent in!



Character Corner

April is a time of growth and change, in nature, in the classroom, and within each student. Flowers bloom outside while friendships have grown inside our classroom family. Much like gardening, maintaining and growing friendships takes time and patience, learning from experience, and constant revisiting to assure continued success. At this point in the year, many students have moved on from just having classmates to having a few, closer friendships - likely with some lost ones along the way. As teachers, we view maintaining friendships as just as important a goal as academic growth, and it often needs just as much, if not more, attention. Navigating relationships successfully is paramount to success now and later in life. Here, we will look at a few very common friendship woes (among many) and our goal in overcoming them. The key word here is COMMON and we hope to instill this mindset so that we all don't overreact to everyday happenings, even when they feel BIG.

Egocentric Thinking: Students think a lot about their wants and feelings, and that is completely typical at this age. We look to begin taking the first steps to building empathy and thinking about others before, during, and after any situations. This might be through conversations, mediating a compromise, or presenting scenarios or read alouds in which there are multiple choices and multiple perspectives. The key in the beginning is to minimize big reactions and feelings when someone contests them in order to take a step back and look at the same situation differently. Once students have a better understanding of this process, they will begin to make choices that benefit the group vs. just themselves.

Threatening and Rewarding: As students grow older, they inevitably learn the temporary power of using threats and rewards in order to control friendships. Threats DOES NOT necessarily mean physical harm threats as the most common reaction is threatening the friendship itself ("I won't be your friend if you don't let me sit there", or "I won't play with you if you don't let me have your snack"). When someone truly cares about another, it can be an incredibly effective thing to make them not want to lose someone. The same goes for rewarding to control a friend. An example being the reverse of a threat ("I will be your friend if you let me have your book", or "We can play together at recess if you let me eat your snack"). In both threatening and rewarding situations, it can yield a temporary success for that student, but ultimately will fail long term. As parents and mentors, we have to approach these situations with an understanding that these are not habits of "bad kids" or "bullies", but very common practices used by all kids at some point. The most effective way to help students here is to have conversations about it while giving examples of better ways to fill their needs without controlling another. It is also helpful to think about the consequences of these actions.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Another typical scenario as students look to build friendships is the mindset that just being with a classmate is a friendship. This thinking leads to issues as students become upset when they aren't sitting together, or standing in line together, or working on work together. Physical presence does not determine a true friendship. We see this lead to problems as big feelings come from times when they are not together. It also shows up when a student will start to feel hurt or think they lost a friend because their classmate chose to work with someone else or play with a different group that day. Much like the egocentric thinking mentioned above, change here stems from thinking about the other person and their needs and how it might have nothing to do with their feeling about you in that moment. Best friends do not have to be next to each other to be best friends. In class, we will purposefully separate friends sometimes during work time, when we pair up students, or in assigned spots or family tables, and monitor and jump in as necessary to help them grow this understanding. We will also highlight successful friendships when we notice them NOT sitting together to drive home the point. Using relevant relationships in your life of people you don't get to see very often also helps here.

Three's a Crowd: Finally, the trickiest of scenarios to navigate, is the friendship of three. We often see the three prior situations show up more often in a group of 3 as there is a struggle to understand the concept of multiple shared friends and there is a belief that they need to take control. Often, students see a competition even when there isn't one. There isn't true ill will here, just an unfortunate byproduct of it. This is a natural progression of growth and development as children, and a sign that they are moving to the next stage. It is difficult and creates many challenges and we often hear from parents the most about this. We tackle this the same way we do each of the areas above, but often with the group of 3 together.

Again, these common challenges increase as the year progresses and we want to assure you that it is on the very forefront of our minds. We know that with consistent approaches and language, and a partnership with you, we will get to watch these students grow many, positive, and long-term friendships. Just know that there will be bumps along the way, and that's okay! As long as we don't feed into the "drama" and provide solutions and supports, friendships will blossom.



The Spring Book Fair is near! Our class will have a time to go down and preview items to make a wish list, and then a time to go down and make purchases as a class. Shopping is optional. If you choose to have your learner shop with our class, please use the wishlist they create or make a list of items to buy. This greatly helps us assist them in making appropriate purchases. To try and accommodate all of our families we have a range of different times available for the on-location Book Fair. Please make note of the hours below. We hope this allows everyone a chance to bring the whole family for one stop shopping and enjoyment!

The book fair will run April 13-17 with the following hours:

Monday April 13th 8:30am - 4:00pm

Tuesday April 14th 8:30am - 4:00pm

Wednesday April 15th (late night) 8:30am - 6:00pm

Thursday April 16th 8:30am - 4:00pm

Friday April 17th 8:30am - 12:00pm

See our classroom emails for our specific preview and shopping dates/times.

A huge shout out and **THANK YOU** to everyone who volunteered to be a Mystery Reader or brought in fun themed snacks for our classroom! We appreciate you! You made March is Reading Month extra special for each and every one of our students!



