



Director's Corner

April 2019

Dear Fraser School Families,

As you may have remembered, the NECPA (National Early Childhood Program Accreditation) visit is scheduled for April 1. After the visit, the verifiers will take our completed Self-Assessment Instrument, the family surveys, and the staff surveys to show the NECPA Council. It will be about 8 weeks before we hear the Council's decision.

Thanks so much to all of the families that completed a survey for the NECPA Council. We needed 91 surveys completed to obtain the mandatory 50% response rate and we actually received 110 for a response rate of 60%!

Thanks, also, to all the families that have signed up for parent/teacher conferences. If you haven't signed up yet, it's not too late! If the conference sign-up sheets are not visible at the classroom door, please ask the teacher what his/her availability is. Please also remember that we do not have school on Friday, April 5 to accommodate conferences.

Also on April 5, we will practice our full evacuation and lock-down drills while there are no children. During the full evacuation drills, the staff practice walking, including pushing the evacuation cribs for the infants, on the sidewalk to the Fraser building located at 6328 Penn Avenue. While walking, we pay special attention to any concerns for the children such as cracked sidewalks, traffic, etc. During the lock-down drill, we practice how we call a lock-down and the procedures that all staff members follow to stay safe. We do these without children so that they do not get anxious.

On a happier note, we will also give certificates to staff members that were mentioned by name in the latest client and consumer survey during our full-staff meeting. It is always nice to receive recognition from our clients!

We have had some concerns expressed about parking and the availability of spots, especially during the busiest drop off and pick up times. You are invited to park in the front parking lot as it is designated in its entirety for parents and guests. Of course, you can also park on the side of the building near the playground fence, especially in the spots designated for drop off and pick up. Unfortunately, we have been told by Aldi's that staff and clients of Fraser ARE NOT to park in their parking lot. They have told us that they will tow any Fraser cars that are parked there at the owner's expense.

Finally, I want to remind families to send a full, balanced lunch for their child. You must send food from the fruit, vegetable, whole grain, and protein food groups. Starting on Monday, April 8, we will place a small note in your child's lunch if we have had to supplement additional food and from which food group.

Thanks for sharing your children with us,
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Getting Ready for Kindergarten

According to the Bloomington Public Schools, the following is a list of important skills for 4-5 year-olds to be successful in kindergarten.

Social and Emotional Development

- Follows rules and routines
- Can play independently
- Gets along with other children
- Uses words to resolve conflicts
- Shows consideration and respect for others
- Participates in group activities
- Can sit still and pay attention
- Asks for help when needed

Self-Help Skills

- Takes care of bathroom needs independently
- Washes hands
- Dresses self, including jackets
- Puts away toys
- Can use a tissue

Language Development

- Can say whole name
- Expresses self verbally using complete sentences
- Can describe objects
- Asks and responds to questions
- Can follow 1 or 2 step directions

Reading Readiness Skills

- Enjoys listening to stories
- Reads or follows text from left to right and top to bottom
- Retells information from a story that he/she has heard
- Predicts what will happen next in a story
- Recognizes upper and lower case letters of the alphabet
- Recognizes that letters make sounds
- Recognizes first name when written
- Rhymes words

- Finds letters and words in books, on papers, and outside
- Names colors

Math Readiness Skills

- Counts to ten forward and backward
- Recognizes numerals 1-10
- Counts objects to ten
- Sorts objects by size, color and shape
- Recognizes and creates patterns
- Identifies six basic shapes: circle, square, oval, diamond, rectangles, and triangle
- Notices numbers and shapes in books, papers, and outside

Writing Skills

- Draws pictures, shapes, and scribbles to share ideas on paper
- Begins printing name using a capital letter only at the beginning

Gross Motor Skills

- Walk and tiptoe on a line
- Crawl on hands and knees
- Jump, landing on both feet
- Stand and hop on one foot
- Run with control
- Catch a large ball
- Walk up and down stairs using alternate feet
- Ride wheeled toys such as tricycles

Small Motor Skills

- Zip, button, snap, tie shoes
- Properly hold and control crayons and pencils
- Hold scissors properly
- Draw and cut simple shapes
- Copy shapes and letters
- Put together simple puzzles
- String small beads or pasta
- Draw a person with a head, face, body, arms, and legs
- Build with small blocks and Legos

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Throughout the week of April 1-5, teachers will offer parent/teacher conferences with the families in their classrooms. The teachers are completing developmental assessments on each child and preparing a conference summary form based upon these assessments. During the conference, teachers will present the conference forms to the families and discuss their child's development. They have also been gathering each child's work throughout the school year and putting it into a portfolio. Teachers will take the opportunity to show parents this portfolio.

This is a great chance for parents to have uninterrupted time with their child's teachers. When parents pick up, it is often busy and there is not much time to have an in-depth conversation. Conferences provide an opportunity for parents to share any concerns or thoughts that they have about their child. Typically, conferences are scheduled for 20 minutes. If you think you will need longer than 20 minutes, please talk with your child's teacher to see if you can schedule a longer conference.

Typically, conference times also focus only on the child's developmental progress in the Fraser School classrooms. Teaching staff are not able to answer questions about a child's therapy or day treatment progress. If you would like to have other professional staff join the conference, please let your child's teacher know ahead of time. Depending upon the therapists' schedules, they may or may not be able to join at the time that you've already signed up for.

Finally, if none of the times that are offered work in your schedule, please talk with your child's teacher and see if you can arrange another time to meet.

Volunteer Appreciation Month

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month. At Fraser School, we have about 50 volunteers that spend time in the classrooms throughout the week. We have a full range of people that choose to help us out including high school students, college students, and adults of all ages.

Some of our volunteers are college students that are completing their practicum or field experience with us. We have a partnership with several technical colleges and universities for their students to spend time in our inclusive classrooms. While it benefits the students to see all of our fantastic teachers at work, it also helps the teachers to have that extra set of hands in the classrooms!

For the first time, we also have two volunteers that help maintain our children's library. Both are adults with special needs that come with their job coaches to complete the work. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement for all of us!

Finally, we have a few people that have volunteered at Fraser School for more than a decade. They may take time off periodically but they have been here at least once per week for many years. We appreciate the commitment to our children, families, and staff for these volunteers. If you see a volunteer in your child's classroom, please thank them for their willingness to share their time and talents.

The broadest, and maybe the most meaningful definition of volunteering: Doing more than you have to because you want to, in a cause you consider good. " – Ivan Scheier

Upcoming events

> Accreditation Visit

April 1, 2019
All day

> No School

April 5, 2019
Parent/Teacher Conferences

> Fraser Walk for Autism

April 13, 2019
7:00 – 9:30 AM

Upcoming events

> Family Fun Night

Thursday, May 16, 2019
6:30-7:30 PM

> No School

Thursday, May 23 and Friday, May 24, 2019
Staff Development Days

> No School

Monday, May 27, 2019
Memorial Day

Severe Weather Drills

In April, we will start conducting monthly severe weather drills again. Tornado season in Minnesota is considered April through September and we are required by law to practice our procedures during these months.

We have two procedures for severe weather. If we are under a severe weather watch, we ensure that all children are inside and safe. If a class is on a walking field trip, we call them back. Groups are not allowed on the playground. Classes will generally stay in their classrooms or gym area and prepare in case a severe weather warning is called.

If a warning is announced, the children will walk or be carried into the basement of the building. For any children that cannot be safely carried to the basement due to their size (over 40 pounds) or due to their needed equipment, we have a severe weather location in a closed space on the main floor of the building. Any volunteers or other adults that cannot go down the stairs, are also welcome to shelter in the main floor severe weather space.

In the basement, each classroom picks a spot where they can comfortably sit with their children and read books until the event is over. For a drill, we are usually in the basement about 10 minutes, just long enough for attendance to be taken and ensure that everyone is safe.

We generally wait until the end of the month to conduct these drills because, if we have a real weather situation where we need to go to the basement, we can count that as our monthly practice. If your child begins talking about “Code Gray” or “Code Black”, they are talking about our severe weather procedures.

