

Director's Corner

May 2017

Dear Fraser Families,

Despite the snow showers that we have had in the past couple days, I think it may be spring! Please take your child's winter gear home, including snow pants, boots, winter coats, and mittens/gloves. In addition, this is a great time of year to check to make sure your child's extra clothing still fits him/her and that it is weather appropriate.

Spring is also the time that we start the mandatory monthly severe weather drills. On April 25, Fraser School staff and children practiced the first drill of the season. When we are in a severe weather or tornado watch, we make sure that all children and staff are in their main classrooms. In the classrooms, staff members close the shades to minimize injury if there is glass breakage and prepare to relocate to the basement, if necessary. If we are in a severe weather or tornado warning, we move all of the children to the basement of the building. These drills will be practiced monthly from April through September. We reassure the children that this is just practice. When we are conducting a drill during drop-off or pick-up, parents are invited to join us in the basement or they can wait upstairs until we conclude the drill.

I wanted to give a few reminders about parking issues. I've noticed our parking spaces have become very full, partly due to Aldi's customers parking in our spaces while the construction is occurring. Fraser staff have limited areas where they can park during work time. Fraser families can park either in the front parking lot or in the stalls on the east side of the building by the playground fence. On the side, there are designated spots marked specifically for parents

that are dropping off or picking up. Families should not park along the yellow curb in the alley way between the two signs that prohibit parking. This narrows the alley too much for two-way traffic and our bus drop off. In addition, families should refrain from using the designated handicapped parking spaces unless they have the appropriate permits. We have several families here that need those parking spaces. Also, please refrain from parking along the yellow curb directly in front of the building doors on the east side of the building. That area is designated for school buses and medical transportation. Thank you for your attention to these issues and for your patience as the Aldi's construction continues.

Finally, I want to give one more reminder as the weather gets nice. Please do not leave any young children unsupervised in your parked vehicle. It is illegal to leave any child 7 years of age or younger unattended in a vehicle. This is considered neglect. All Fraser staff members are mandated reporters and are required to report this to Child Protection Services. Thanks for your cooperation.

Thanks for sharing your children with us,

Deedee Stevens-Neal
612-798-8319
Deedee.Stevens-Neal@fraser.org

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Measles in Hennepin County

Measles, also called rubeola, is a very contagious disease caused by a virus. Symptoms usually start 8-12 days after a person is exposed. The first symptom is usually fever. The rash appears 2-3 days after the fever begins and lasts 5-6 days. The rash generally begins at the hairline, moves to the face and upper neck and then down the body.

The Minnesota Department of Health has had 28 cases of measles reported in Hennepin County this year as of April 27, 2017. All of the cases involve children that are 5 years old or younger. Most of these cases involve children that have not been fully immunized.

I want to take this opportunity to remind families of Fraser School's policy regarding an outbreak of a communicable disease and children that are unimmunized or under-immunized. This policy is located on page 8 of Section 2 of the 2016-2017 Parent Handbook:

"If a case of measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis, polio, or diphtheria occurs in the child care setting, children who are inadequately immunized may be excluded for the incubation period of the disease. This exclusion may be necessary because these children may become infected and contribute to spreading the disease. Exclusion **does** apply to children who have not been immunized for conscientiously held beliefs or medical contraindications. Fraser School will follow the recommendations of the Minnesota Department of Health regarding exclusion of inadequately immunized children.

Children with inadequate immunization will also be required to provide a doctor's note if they are displaying symptoms of a disease for which they have not been immunized."

2017-2018 Fraser School Calendar

Attached to this newsletter is the 2017-2018 school calendar. There are a couple things to note:

The new calendar starts on Friday, September 1, which is a staff development day. The other staff development day is Thursday, August 31 and is listed on the 2016-2017 Fraser School calendar. I wanted to point out that both of these days are closed to students.

We typically are closed for two days for winter break, December 24 and 25. However, in 2017, we will be closed on December 25 and 26 for winter break.

Our spring parent/teacher conferences are scheduled for April 4 and 5, 2018 with spring break on April 6, 2018.

Staff Development

On May 25 and 26, 2017, school will be closed to all children so that the Fraser School staff members can attend staff development. During these workshops, we will have speakers from the Center for Inclusive Child Care train the staff on the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. The Pyramid Model was developed by two national, federally-funded research and training centers: the Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning and the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention.

The Pyramid Model relies on a foundation of teacher training, along with school systems and policies that support the framework. The next step in the pyramid is to build relationships and provide a high-quality supportive environment which benefits all young children in their social and emotional development. The next step up the

pyramid builds upon the universal supports and adds some targeted strategies to prevent behavior problems. Finally, the top of the pyramid trains teachers on some specific intervention strategies for children that may have challenges with behaviors.

The Pyramid Model was first studied within public school classrooms in several states. The preliminary results of the studies were first presented at conferences and published in education journals in 2011. Since then, more extensive research has been conducted and the framework is now considered a best practice. The state of Minnesota Department of Human Services supports this model of social and emotional development. We are excited to learn more about the Pyramid Model and how we may be able to incorporate its ideas into our curriculum.

Teacher Appreciation Week

“If you can read this, thank a teacher”
I’m sure that most of you have seen this bumper sticker. But, it actually took years of learning before that magical time when you first learned to read words. In fact, at Fraser School, we sow the seeds of reading in all of our classrooms from infancy through prekindergarten.

In the infant classroom, babies are exposed to books from their first day. The infants learn that reading with an adult can be a joyous experience. They also learn that they can hold books themselves and flip through the pages of the board books that we have in the classroom library area. They can look at the pictures in the books and may point and say some of the words that they have heard. All of these activities begin the love of reading.

In the toddler classrooms, the young children are also read to multiple times daily. In addition, the

teaching staff use photos and other symbols so that the toddlers can recognize and “read” directions. For example, we have stop signs on the gates and doors and the children learn that they need to stop and wait for an adult. The teachers also put photos of the toys on the shelves as a symbol for the children so that they can help put the toys away. This understanding that symbols can be read and interpreted begins the process of understanding that letters are also symbols that can be read and interpreted.

In the preschool classrooms, the children are introduced to their written names and the letters that they contain. Using children’s names, as opposed to a letter of the week, makes the learning more personal and motivating. Children learn that some children’s names contain the same letters and may associate phonetic sounds with those common letters. They also become aware that books contain words that are read the same every time. They may memorize books and “reread” them over and over. Children at this age are also learning that stories have a beginning, middle, and end. This helps children learn sequencing.

In the prekindergarten classroom, children may expand on their knowledge of letters and phonetic sounds. They may begin to recognize some simple words by sight such as mom, dad, dog, and cat. They also practice rhyming words and using alliteration. Children of this age may play with words and be silly. They are also expanding their vocabulary through books and experiences. Prekindergarten children also may practice writing strings of letters and then ask what it says. They truly understand that words are made of letters and that these words can be read by anyone.

May 8-12 is Teacher Appreciation Week. During this week, make sure to thank all the teachers, including the ones who give our littlest learners a great beginning to their academic success.

This month's events

> Family Fun Night

May 18, 2017
6:30-7:30 PM

> No School

May 25-26, 2017
Staff Development Days

> No School

May 28, 2017
Memorial Day

Upcoming events

> No School

July 4, 2017
Independence Day

> No School

August 31-September 1, 2017
Staff Development Days

> No School

September 4, 2017
Labor Day

Construction Plans for Fraser School

I met with a group of Fraser administrative staff to review some of the initial ideas about the upcoming construction at Fraser School. While plans and the time line have not yet been finalized, I will keep families in the loop about what will happen and when.

Our first step is to get the state fire marshal to inspect the gym and approve it for two temporary classrooms to use while our permanent classrooms are being remodeled. Classroom staff members were consulted and have given a couple suggestions as to how to make these temporary classrooms more comfortable and workable for all ages of children. The infants will never use these temporary classrooms due to the need for crib space and diapering facilities.

We will ensure that all children, their families, and our staff stay safe during the remodeling efforts.

Family Fun Night

On Thursday, May 18, Fraser School will host its last Family Fun Night of the 2016-2017 school year. The event will occur from 6:30-7:30 PM and, weather permitting, will be held outside on the playground.

The evening usually starts with a reading or dramatic presentation of the book that is the focus. After the book, there are a variety of activities that parents and children can do together. At the end of the evening, we regroup to have a closing activity.

The planning committee is busy brainstorming books and activities for the evening. The classrooms will read the book daily all during the Family Fun Night week so the children are very familiar with the story by Thursday. We hope to see all of the families participate!