

Friday, October 19, 2007

Dear Parents,

My Monster was our big and little book. The Phonic Reader was The Parade and the two Phonics Library books were I See (Ants) & I See (Dinosaurs). Our Kinderfriends book was Check Up. Our Read Aloud Book was More Spaghetti, I Say! and our Theme Link book was Doctor DeSoto.

Our letter of the week was "Rr" for Reggie Rooster. For the last three weeks, we have been spending the entire week studying about one letter. Your child experiences many different activities during the week to teach about the letter name, letter shapes, both large and small and finally, the sound the letter makes.

One of the children's favorite ways to learn the letter of the week is with the help of an Alphafriend. Alphafriends are 26 engaging alphabet characters designed to captivate youngsters. Based on research that indicates mnemonics, or memory-aids, are useful in early phonemic awareness and phonics learning, each distinct alphabet character brings both the shape and the sound of the letter to life.

I introduce each week's Alphafriend by asking the children to solve a riddle. They then meet the Alphafriend for the first time and say his/her name, stressing the letter sound slightly. We then learn the Alphafriend's song. This is their favorite part! They listen for words that start with the same sound as the Alphafriend. I then show them a scene on a folder and they look for and name the pictures that begin with the letter of the week. The children should be learning to connect the sound with the Alphafriend letter.

Mr. Lentz has created an Alphafriends page on his class web site. There are links to this page on the main page of the school web page. When you go to the Alphafriends web page, you can pick an Alphafriend. When you go to their page you can see a picture of the Alphafriend. You can also listen to the Alphafriend song and read the lyrics. There is also a link to the Starfall.com site where you can practice with the letter.

Your child should also be bringing home completed pages from his/her practice book. These pages reinforce different concepts of phonemic and letter awareness. On some pages, students identify which words begin with the letter of the week. On other pages, they practice writing the letter of the week. They also cut out pictures and decide which of two pictures (on opposite sides of the paper) begin with the letter of the week. They also sort picture cards in class to match the initial sound.