

AITKEN TO KNOW

A Newsletter for parents, teachers and students at Aitken School

The mission of Mildred H. Aitken School, in partnership with children and families, is to maintain a safe, nurturing environment in which responsibility, mutual respect and high academic standards are achieved.

DATES TO REMEMBER

February

- 02/06 Aitken Band Concert
7pm
02/09 PTO Meeting 6:30pm
02/17 Early Release 12:45pm
No Afternoon Pre-K / K
02/20 - 02/24 Winter Vacation

March

- 03/07 Aitken School Council
3:10 pm
Boy's Puberty Night
7pm
03/09 2nd Trimester Ends
PTO Meeting 6:30 pm
03/14 Girls Puberty Night
7pm
03/15 AM K Play 6:30 pm
03/16 Used Book Swap
PM & Full Day K Play
6:30pm
03/17 Early Release 12:45
No PM K or PreK
03/19 - 03/25 Reading
Challenge
03/21 Report Cards Issued
Aitken School Council
3:10pm
03/24 Family Bingo 6:30 -
7:30 pm

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents,

Welcome February and Happy Groundhog Day! It's always fun to find out if we are going to have some more snow or if spring is just around the corner.

2nd Trimester Progress Reports

Parents of students in grades 1-5 received mid-trimester progress reports on January 19th . If you would like to have a conference with your child's teacher, please call and schedule an appointment (336-5230).

Music has begun!

Our weekly art classes ended for students on January 20 th and music classes began on January 23! Mrs. Karen Roderick will be here through January 2018. Classes for students in grades 1-5 will be held weekly following the same schedule as art.

Aitken Grade 5 Band Concert

Monday, February 6 th , will be the premiere of this year's Aitken School Band under the direction of our instrumental music teacher, Mr. Paul Anderson! The concert will be held in the gymnasium and will begin at 7:00 PM.

Box Tops!

Our Box Top contest will be Feb. 1-15. The class that brings in the most Box Tops during this period will win an extra recess!



MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL CONTINUED

Student Absences

Attendance at school is vital to student success. However, if your child is too ill to attend, please call by 9 AM to report his/her excused absence. If we do not receive a call from a parent or guardian, the absence is registered as an unexcused absence.

Winter Vacation

The February break is almost upon us. This year, a full week of vacation is scheduled - February 20-24.

Math Fun!

Look for fun ways to explore math at home! Counting money and making change is one of the strongest ways that a parent can reinforce the base 10 number system as well as strengthen computation, number sense and mental math. ATMs and credit/debit have decreased the amount of times that students are exposed to transactions involving coins and counting change. Investigating three-dimensional shapes, measuring and cooking, dividing wholes into fractions, practicing number facts and problem solving without using paper are just a few of the ways you can bring make math fun! Challenge your child to measure objects/rooms at home using rulers, yard sticks, meter sticks and liquid/dry measuring tools! At school we are continually seeking to make the math children are learning relevant to their world. Make math an everyday family event!

As always, please feel free to give me a call if you have any questions or concerns or suggestions! We welcome your input!

Yours truly,

Nancy Gagliardi
Principal



READING RESOLUTIONS

By: Lynn Owens & Joanna Rioux

Hints to Help Your Child Complete Reading Homework

Tips from an article by Carolyn Wilhelm

Many teachers often give children a nightly assignment to read. Here are some helpful tips to make this time productive at home.

- 1. Do not skip this time.** A half hour every week is just not enough. Your child needs to read to a few minutes each day. The long-term effects of skipping nightly reading homework will show in your child's progress at school.
- 2. Choose the right time.** Always try to find a time when your child will cooperate and when neither of you are in a rush. The best time might be right after school, after dinner, or before bed. You need to find a time that works for you and your family.
- 3. At the emergent level (when the child is learning sight words, short vowels, and mostly individual letter sounds), allow the child to use all the resources of the book, including pictures.** Parents sometimes tell us that they covered the pictures and forced the child to try and read the "big" words. At this point in early reading, it is not always possible to read the big words. The point of emergent readers is to learn sight words, use left to right reading orientation, realize each word is separate, to utilize the pictures, and to experience reading success.
- 4. Do not stop reading aloud to your child.** It is a mistake to think that once your child can read on his or her own, the parent is out of the picture. Reading aloud to children should continue through grade four or higher. Why? Adults can read such a great variety of stories and expose children to a huge amount of vocabulary that children cannot access on their own. Children need to be reminded that reading is interesting.
- 5. Discuss what was read.** Help your child understand the point of reading is to understand, not just "word call."



IN THE LIBRARY WITH MRS. LAMAR

January lesson plan overview:

This month we are learning about biographies, website evaluation, timelines, personal narratives, and internet search tips.

Centers:

Due to a recent reorganization of the library space, I have cut down on the centers. We will always have Accelerated Reader and audio books as centers and I am in the process of obtaining some STEM materials for future centers and possibly a permanent Maker Space! More details to come!

Technology:

Fifth grade is starting an online timeline project after completing biography research. We are using www.sutori.com to create our timelines. Ask your fifth grade student for a peek at their project! We are also working on digital citizenship. This is ongoing as classes rotate into technology. First grade is working on their typing skills. If they have access to a computer at home, extra practice on the correct placement of fingers on a keyboard always helps!



AN ARTICLE OF INTEREST SHARED WITH YOU BY KAREN CICATIELLO, THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

The school year is just flying by, as usual. Hope you are all surviving the flu and cold season. This month's article is titled: "How to Avoid Passing Anxiety on to Your Kids" This article gives an overview of tips to help yourself, and your kids, by learning techniques to manage stress in a healthy way. You can access the article online by going to the Aitken to Know website at <http://blog.aitkentoknow.com/blog/>

P.E. NEWS



PHYSICAL EDUCATION AT AITKEN
MEANS MOVEMENT FUN FOR
EVERYONE

by Mr. Queenan

“SWEAT AND SMILES”

The students will be participating in “Jump Rope For Heart”. It is fun and each grade is able to participate in various stations that alternate different healthy heart activities.

THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION – Has These Heart Healthy Facts, Tips, and more on there website:

<http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>

The students are also learning facts about the heart and lungs such as location.

Your heart is in the middle of your chest, about the size of your fist. Some people think it's on the left, but it isn't! It's just slightly tilted to the left.

Your Lungs are located on each side of your chest.

Did you know? If you walk 1,000 miles a year—in your lifetime you'll have walked around the world twice!

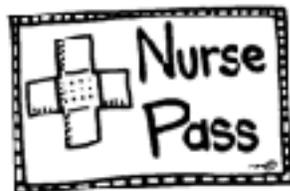
Regular physical activity may improve your quality of sleep, memory and decision-making skills. Sleep is needed to rest your brain and muscles, and to replenish your body. Without sleep your brain will not work as well, muscles get tired faster, and energy levels decrease.

FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE

A healthy school environment requires the cooperation and effort of us all working together. During this time of year we tend to see a higher incidence of strep throat, respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses. I would like to remind everyone that they can help to protect themselves and their families from many of these airborne illnesses. Follow the Habits for Good Health listed below recommended by the Center for Disease Control:

Habits for Good Health

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze—throw the tissue away after you use it. If you do not have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbow.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water especially after you cough or sneeze. If you are not near water, use an alcohol based hand cleaner.
- Stay away as much as you can from people who are sick.
- If you or your child gets the flu, stay home from work or school. Kids arriving to school and their first stop is to the nurse's office with a fever or upset stomach is an indication that they should have stayed home that day
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs often spread this way.
- Dress for the weather. Come to school dressed for the winter. Wear layers of loose fitting clothing. Wear mittens and gloves. Wear a hat. Remember, the air that is trapped inside your clothing, warmed by your body heat, is the best protection from the cold. Winter has arrived- please keep warm!



DIFFERENTIATION NEWS

I am currently working with students in several classrooms that include: 2 second grades, 3 third grades, 3 fourth grades, and 1 fifth grade.

Grade 2: Second grade students in Mrs. Rondeau's room are practicing time skills. Mrs. Jodat's class is practicing subtraction strategies. I work with different students each day of the week which enables me to deliver instruction at each child's level. This means that some students use base ten blocks to help solve equations, while others are subtracting large numbers on paper or white boards.

Grade 3: Mrs. Thurber's class is practicing addition and subtraction strategies. The other classes are beginning a differentiated perimeter and area unit.

Grade 4: Math students are reviewing fractions, division, and multiplication. My reading group is using nonfiction comprehension strategies to read science and social studies texts.

Grade 5: The fifth grade reading group is also using nonfiction texts to improve comprehension skills.

Please remember that if you ever have any questions about what we are doing with differentiation, I can be contacted at manickasb@seekonkschools.org or at 508-336-5230. I also have a webpage on the Aitken School website that has interesting information for parents of all students.

MUSIC NOTES

Greetings!

It is time once again for music classes to return to Aitken School. We will begin by looking at some songs honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other freedom fighters. In addition, we will learn and discuss both new and familiar Patriotic music.

All grades will explore different ways to use our voices and how the vocal mechanism works. Coming up, we'll learn some basic concepts of the science of sound and how it travels. Also, we will continue to strengthen rudimentary written notation skills. We will achieve this through singing, movement, writing, composing, and other classroom activities.

I am looking forward to a great year!

Karen Roderick
Music



TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

It is that time of year again. We start thinking about and planning for the MCAS in grades 3-5. I will soon be heading into the classrooms and giving tutorials on how to use the tools, technology, and some formatting they will see on the MCAS. We will get them as prepared as possible. Remember I have some links on my website that can be helpful. Also, students have access to my Google Classroom, I do not remove any posts until the end of the year, they can review anything in there.

I would like to give a big shout out to all the students who have gotten 100% fluency on their Math Facts in Reflex! It's a great accomplishment, good work!

Mrs. Keough
<http://seekonktechintegration.weebly.com/>



5 THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER SAY TO AN ANXIOUS CHILD

An Article Shared with You from Tara Haggerty, the School Adjustment Counselor.

5 Things You Should Never Say to an Anxious Child

by Renee Jain on December 14, 2016 in GoZen! Anxiety Relief

I wanted to sleep with a bat under my pillow. It was plastic; nonetheless, it was a weapon. I was 5 years old, and I firmly believed that each night when I went to sleep, a robber would break into the house. I needed something to defend myself (and maybe my family), and my brother's yellow Wiffle ball bat seemed ideal. Unfortunately, my parents never complied with my request.

They didn't understand why I was so worried. After all, there was no logical evidence to support my anxiety: our neighborhood was safe, we had never experienced a break-in, and we had a security alarm to alert us of any danger. But who said anxiety was logical? It's generally not. Actually, let's back up. Who said what I was experiencing was "anxiety"?

Anxiety is a word that I use now, based on personal and professional hindsight. Back then, as far as my parents and I were concerned, I was simply prone to a bit of extra worry. None of us understood that my fearful thoughts were actually provoking a real nervous system response.

So how did my loving parents deal with my countless "what if" questions? "What if we get robbed?" "What if we forget to turn the alarm on?" "What if we leave the door unlocked?" "What if the robber finds my room?" How did they handle it when I knocked on their door at two o'clock in the morning, asking to go downstairs to check the lock once more for good measure? My parents' first line of defense was always reassurance. The next strategy involved invoking my logic. When all else failed, which it often did, they (understandably) became frustrated and sometimes expressed it.

Please know that my parents are amazing. They always supported me, but they didn't really understand what I was going through at the time. It took me a couple of decades to figure it out and to find ways to help alleviate my worries. To help other families going through something similar, I want to point out five phrases that were said to me out of great love yet were unable to help me when I was in the throes of anxiety. Knowing what I know now, I'll also tell you what I wish I could've expressed to my parents. Finally, I'll present some alternative ways to help a child experiencing anxiety. Here's that list:

1. Mommy said, "It's going to be OK. Trust me."

I wish I could have said, "Mommy, I know you're trying to make me feel better, but my mind is telling me the opposite: 'It's NOT going to be OK.' And my body seems to be responding to my mind. My heart is racing, my palms are sweating, and my tummy feels funny. It's hard for your loving words to overpower what's happening inside of me."

Here's what we know: The stress response is hardwired into our nervous system as a protective mechanism devised to enact the fight-or-flight reaction to threats. Anxiety mimics this response. As such, when your child is knee-deep in anxiety, a rapid stream of chemicals is dumped into the body for survival. This makes it difficult to think clearly and, subsequently, for words of reassurance to sink in.

Try this: Respond to your child's nervous system first. Help them calm down with deep breathing. This can take the mind and body from fight-or-flight to rest-and-digest mode.

5 THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER SAY TO AN ANXIOUS CHILD

Continued

2. Daddy said, “There’s nothing to be scared of.”

I wish I could have said, *“Daddy, remember the first time you asked mommy out on a date? Remember your first day at a new job? Or remember the time when you got in that bike accident? Maybe your parents knew everything was going to be OK, too, but you didn’t know that. You experienced real fear. My fear is real, too.”*

Here’s what we know: Research shows anxiety initiates a fear alarm inside your child’s mind and body. It’s a false alarm, but nevertheless, it feels very real. That alarm is for protection; your child feels “stress” or “fear” in order to survive. To make sure one is really paying attention, the mind might even exaggerate the object of the worry (e.g., mistaking a stick for a snake).

Try this: Validate your child’s emotions. You can say, *“I see that you’re scared. I’ve been scared before, too, and I know what that feels like.”*

3. Mommy said, “Let me tell you all the reasons you don’t have to worry.”

I wish I could have said, *“Mommy, I know that what you’re saying makes sense. It’s just that it’s hard to think clearly and logically in this moment. I have a lot of feelings right now and I’m just focusing on those. It’s just really hard to think clearly.”*

Here’s what we know: Studies show one by-product of the anxiety response is that the prefrontal cortex – the more logical part of the brain – gets put on hold while the more automated emotional brain takes over. After all, cave people didn’t have a lot of time to use logic when it came to running away or fighting a predator.

Try this: Soothe the nervous system with a visualization exercise. Ask your child to envision a still, quiet place. Ask them to breathe in and out in a way that’s comfortable and to describe this place to you. Once your child is calm, discuss the idea that feelings are not necessarily facts. Feelings can be challenged by saying, “Hey, I don’t think you’re really true!” Self-disputation is a great way to quell worry.

4. Daddy shouted, “STOP BEING SUCH A WORRIER!”

I wish I could have said, *“Daddy, I know that you’re frustrated and even angry. This makes me feel so bad because I want to stop being a worrier; I really do. I want it to stop, but I just don’t know how. I wish I knew how.”*

Here’s what we know: Kids who worry know that they worry more than others because they are labeled as “worriers” from a young age. They also compare themselves to others who have less anxious reactions to the same fears. In fact, many kids develop anxiety about having anxiety. Add on a dose of guilt from parents, and kids can feel completely miserable. Remember, kids often feel as helpless as adults do when it comes to chronic worry.

Try this: To the best of your ability, do not label your child. Instead, when they’re in a relaxed state, explain the evolutionary basis of worry. Seriously? Yes! Kids love to know that worry has a purpose and that everyone worries to some extent. You can use this infographic to guide your explanation.

5 THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER SAY TO AN ANXIOUS CHILD

Continued

5. Mommy and daddy said, “We don’t understand why you’re so worried.”

I wish I could have said, “I know you don’t understand, but I need you to try. I need you to try to understand what I’m going through. Put your hand on my racing heart, listen to my shallow breath, look at me... this is real. I want you to understand. I need you to understand. Please tell me you get it. Please.”

Here’s what we know: When a child is anxious, they feel scared and helpless. If you also feel helpless as a parent, empathy can help guide your actions. By stepping into your child’s shoes and understanding their feelings and perspectives, your reaction to their needs will be more authentic and in line with their needs.

Try this: When your child feels anxious, try to recall a time when you felt true fear. Then connect with your child using these three words: “I get it.” Let your child know that you see that they are going through something challenging. Let your child know that you really see them.

On a final note, I wanted to say something to my parents and to all parents on behalf of anxious children: *“We, too, get it. We understand what you sacrifice for us. We know that our pain and struggle become your own. We know that even on the days you feel completely helpless, you still try to support us – and you do. By never losing faith and never giving up, you are our models of grit and perseverance. Thank you.”*

Jain, Renee, (2016). 5 Things You Should Never Say to an Anxious Child, Retrieved from <http://www.gozen.com/5-things-you-should-never-say-to-an-anxious-child/>

