

CJDS Weekly Update

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To: Undisclosed-recipients:

Subject: CJDS Weekly Update

CJDS Update

Dear Families,

Often in these updates along with CJDS information I enjoy sharing educational thoughts. Last year I had the opportunity to have dinner with Walter Gilliam. Walter is a professor at Yale's child-study center. He mentioned a study he was working on that estimated that each year, across the country, more than 5,000 children are expelled from pre-K programs because teachers feel unable to control them. In a recent national survey, 46 percent of kindergarten teachers said that at least half the kids in their classes had problems following directions.

There was a time that educators were taught that other than medication there was not much that could be done to help children with impulsive behavior. However, this is no longer true. Many researchers believe that if preschool children are allowed to explore emotions by problem solving through play and teacher facilitated explorations they will gain better self-control. Motivational theorists explain that elementary age children show more control and desire to learn when they are in classes that provide autonomy (they have some decision making powers), a loving teacher, and learning experiences that provide children with a feeling of competence (problems that are not too easy or too frustrating, but allow for children to think and try out different ideas).

I can guarantee that out of the 5000 children expelled from pre-K none of them ever attended CJDS. At our school we are able to provide children with certain autonomy in their classrooms, nurturing teachers, and inquiry based learning that supports each child in gaining self-control and feelings of a high level of competence.

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A peek into a few classrooms

Ms. Sharny's Aanaf class

During water play the class predicted which classroom objects would sink and float then put them in the water to see. They also read books about sinking and floating and had time to explore the objects in the water.

In another activity, children shared photos and souvenirs from their summer vacations and wrote and illustrated about their trips. The children used their imaginations to pack "suitcases" and listed items they would take with them on vacation.

Ms. Kristin's Aalva class

The children worked together to create classroom rules that are meaningful to each class member. In a celebration of each child's uniqueness the class made some wonderfully creative self-portraits using a variety of materials. These are hanging in the hallway. The class also brainstormed and made a list of what types of things they want to learn about this year. The week ended with the class creating their first class book. It was a birthday book for Elijah Drake. Another special activity was the exploring the new classroom light box, with colored rocks and shells.

In Torah time as the class gets ready for the Jewish New Year, Rabbi Levi, HaMorah Devorah's husband, came in to blow the shofar. On Rosh Hashanah there is a custom to eat sweet foods like honey to symbolize our desire for a sweet year. The children made honey pots with HaMorah Devorah.

Ms. Etu's second grade

The class read *The Important Book* by Margaret Wise Brown and then mirrored the pattern in the book for their own books entitled *The Important Thing About Me*. These books are hanging in the hallway- along with the classes "Me Quilts". The class also began reading *Frog and Toad Are Friends* and used that book to discuss the elements of a story, which will lead into the children creating Story Maps. The class is using Project Read to guide their language arts lessons. The students are having fun recognizing 'red words' (which are words that do not follow the rules of the English language) in their morning work and written work. One activity in math included

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using base 10 blocks to gain a better understanding of place value.

News and notes

I will be sending out a description of the upcoming Jewish holidays. Please note the five days that our school will be closed this month and October 1st. We fully appreciate the burden that these days put on our working parents, but each is a Biblical holiday that according to our interpretation of Jewish law mandates school closure.

Our Open House is scheduled for September 7 from 6:00-7:15. Our plan is to begin with a quick welcome from myself that will be followed with each lead teacher presenting an overview of the class. More details will be made available closer to the date.

Debbie Lowsky, CCC-SLP will be performing a speech and language screening for kindergarten children on Tuesday. In the next week she will be administering a hearing screening for all children in kindergarten through fifth grade. Amy Berger and two USC graduate students will assist her. Debbie will send a note home with any child who seems to need additional testing.

The after school chess club has begun this past week and is Monday at 2:45 for K-3rd grade students and 3:30 for 4th and 5th grade students.

Best

Rabbi Meir