

'Lunch & Learn' session helps preschool parents ready their kids

Kim Leary, master teacher at School 1, conducted her first monthly "Lunch & Learn" session recently for parents who have children in the preschool. Working to ensure that the kids get what they need, Leary also is charged with serving as an instructional coach to the staff.

Ready Rosie is the communication tool that the school utilizes for communication for teachers and family. It's important that parents familiarize themselves with the system and take time to view all the helpful resources available.

The 3- and 4-year-old preschool students at School 1, both in-person and virtual, are all settling in. The nervousness from the beginning of the year is gone, Leary noted.

The goal of the Lunch & Learn was the importance of preschool and helping your child be ready for the challenges. Leary said that familiar routines at home and school will help build strong health and habits for a student.

There are four main building blocks for preschool students, Leary detailed. All four are interconnected and children develop each on different paces.

Health & self care

This is the foundation for everything else. Children need to fuel and care for their bodies so they have energy and focus, and feel their best. Leary noted that it's imperative that preschool students get 10 to 12 hours of sleep a night, eat healthy food, be able to do basic dressing, use the bathroom independently, and be able to say their full name and age.

Routines are extremely important for this age. Parents can create and use a Velcro board with visuals so activities become habit, such as brushing teeth and getting dressed. A visual board shows them clear expectations and keeps them engaged. "We use routines for everything we do at school," Leary said.

Gross & fine motor development

Both at school and home, children need to use and develop the use of small and large muscles. Activities to develop small muscles include buttoning, zipping, using scissors, using a pencil, and coloring. Running, jumping and other physical activities develop large muscles. Parents can help their child practice at home with the videos posted on Ready Rosie. Leary asked the parents to draw a smiley face with their non-dominant hand to show them how awkward it feels for their child to learn to draw. She said to give them lots of opportunity to practice and develop at home.

Social emotional development

This is a tough area for these little ones, Leary said, to learn how to control their emotions. Parents can help them learn that and how to handle conflicts. Being in school with others will also help them develop those skills. Preschool students need to play with other kids and learn to make friends. Parents can also help children understand expectations by using something like a sand timer to demonstrate time. This helps them take ownership and be ready.

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Health, Self-Care & Routines



Gross and Fine Motor Development



Social Emotional Development



Cognitive Development



Morning Routine

Routines (Example: Morning, Bedtime, Weekend)

You can cut out pictures to create a routine chart that works for your family.



Eat



Brush Teeth



Get Dressed



Pack Lunch / Get Backpack Ready



Feed Pets

Creating Their Own Sweet Treats



Students in Ms. Wittig's class at School 1 had a special virtual cooking class, where they made baked apples as part of their tree study. Students followed the recipe along with Ms. Wittig in this educational, fun and delicious activity.

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Cognitive development

Preschool students are learning right now how they think, remember, solve problems and make decisions. While they are learning about this in school, parents can help in a number of ways. To help their reading readiness, parents can use flash cards or other methods to help them recognizing letters. Help them understand how printed words have meaning by running your finger along as you read to them. Parents can also play rhyming games. You can play a game with your purse. Say peas and then they find keys. Say honey and they find money. Parents can help their child with math games as well. Ask them to take five tiny steps, then five enormous steps.

“We move them along from wherever they are,” Leary said of the staff at School 1. “We support and build on their strengths.” Leary encouraged parents to reach out to her anytime by emailing kleary@wpschools.org.

Memorial concludes Week of Respect by kicking off this year's House System

Last Friday, on the final day of the Week of Respect, Memorial Middle School kicked off this year's "House System," by having all staff and students wear their house t-shirts.

Memorial's House System consists of four houses: earth, wind, fire and water. Each house represents a character trait that we support and instill in all our students and staff: earth - trustworthy, wind - respect, fire - responsibility and water - caring.

The system was implemented last year with a goal of improving the school's culture and to give every student, teacher, and staff member a place to belong. Houses promote positive relationships with teachers and peers. House assignment is purposefully random so students work with and get to know kids outside of their normal social circles. This promotes a sense of belonging and connection at school.

Having others (teachers and peers) to turn to helps each student feel that the school is a place where they can get help if they need it. Members of each house work together as a team to compete in academics, athletics, school spirit, good citizenship, community service, field day, school attendance, and a number of other things that come up at school that we can use as constructive competition. The always-friendly rivalry builds a healthy community spirit where friendships are strengthened and school becomes a place where everyone feels connected.

Even though everyone may represent a different house, they are all MUSTANGS and must respect each other. House events will take place throughout the school year. Each house will earn and accumulate points towards a final reward. This year due to social distancing and contact tracing, the house events are being modified, with the goal of returning to the authenticity of a true middle school house system.



Morning Routine

Part of the morning routine in Mrs. Casanovas' preschool 4 class at School 1 consists of students "signing in." This is a time where the student is encouraged to navigate independently. For example, knowing where to find the sign in sheet, getting their own pencil, "writing their name" then returning all items where they belong.