

Dear Families,

I believe that the kindergarten year is a critical one in the development of a child both spiritually and academically. This experience is unique and can hold the key to the love of life-long learning. St. Francis kindergarten is a self contained setting with a teacher and paraprofessional.

The kindergarten year has a definite place and an important purpose in the educational life of the child. It helps to lay the foundation for the child to become a thinking person. The kindergarten classroom provides materials, experiences, information, relationships and opportunities planned to meet the needs of the young child. Kindergarten helps the child move with ease from home to school.

In reading I will be using a combination of the Wit & Wisdom and Foundation programs. Our Math program is Go Math. In Reading and Math, the children are assessed individually and in small groups. In January, I will be using the Fountas & Pinnell Assessment System to identify the reading level of each child. This system will assist in helping you choose an appropriate book for your child to read independently. Our program is designed to be developmentally appropriate and to allow for the differences and experiences each child brings to the classroom. The major goals of the program are to increase basic skills in the areas of literacy and math, build self-esteem, and develop a sense of responsibility and respect for others. Each day's schedule is centered on language-based activities and hands-on learning experiences as building blocks in this foundation for learning. Homework is assigned Monday thru Thursday. It is a review of the material taught in class. At different times throughout the year,

children will have Reading, Math, Handwriting, and Journal for homework. In addition, parents will be asked to read to their child daily and record it in a Reading log. Also, it is very important that reading words are reviewed on a daily basis.

There are many objectives of the kindergarten program that the five year old child is striving for regardless of the content of the subject area. All these objectives are fundamentals which will be built upon in later years. These must be mastered before the child can expect to succeed in the upper levels of the educational program.

Please check my web page for weekly classroom updates.

I am looking forward to a great year!

Mrs. Quinn - squinn@stfrancisschoolbh.net

Dear Family:

A new school year has been launched! This year, I'll be using a program called **Fundations**[®] to teach some important basics of reading and spelling. However, I am going to **need your help**.

We know that when a child has a "Coach" in addition to a classroom teacher, the child makes significant progress. We will work together as a "team" – I'll be the teacher, and you the coach.

I will do my best to provide you with the necessary tools to take on that role. I'll keep you informed of "what is happening" in the classroom and provide suggestions and a guide as to "what can be happening" at home.

I look forward to a very successful year as we work together with your child in Fundations. We will have fun teaching and helping your child build a strong foundation for literacy!

The next letter will include Unit 1 and related activities.

Once again **thank you** for your interest and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Quinn





You are likely wondering, "What is Foundations?"

Research indicates that **systematic** and **explicit phonics instruction** is effective for all children. Foundations provides a systematic and explicit approach to reading and spelling with phonics. We will combine this instruction with the **reading of good literature**, which is just as important for your child's development.

Foundations is systematic

because it follows a very definite sequence for teaching and it follows a very definite procedure to teach those concepts.

Foundations is explicit

because this program does not leave room for guessing. It teaches all concepts directly. The children will review letters and how to form these letters. They will learn sounds using keywords to help them remember. They will soon move on to blend the sounds into words.

As the year progresses, Foundations introduces many aspects of word structure and sentence structure. I shall be sending home guides and activities for all of this.

You are also probably wondering, "How can I become a successful 'Coach' in this reading program?"

As a 'Coach' you can:

- 1.** Read the Foundations letters that I send home. These letters will contain updates, program information, and activity suggestions.
- 2.** Set aside time to do the "home activities" with your child.
- 3.** Monitor your child's progress and share successes as well as concerns with me.

I feel certain that you will find working with your child in Foundations very rewarding. Your child will treasure your involvement!



Help Develop Oral Expression And Vocabulary

You can help your child develop **oral language** (the spoken word) with the following ideas. Do these anytime you are with your child:

1. Encourage your child to answer “wonder” statements.

Say such things as “I wonder why a dog barks.” Or say, “I wonder if Grandpa likes spinach.”

2. Help your child expand his/her vocabulary by rephrasing.

When your child says something such as, “He’s scared,” you could say, “Yes, the dog barks because he is frightened, you are correct!”

3. Ask open-ended questions.

Do not ask, “Are you raking leaves?” (The child would simply answer, “yes.”) Instead, ask, “What are you doing with your rake?” The child will answer you and then you can rephrase the answer to further develop vocabulary (see # 2).

4. Limit the amount of TV

However, if your child watches a children’s program, talk about it (see #’s 1, 2, 3).

5. Provide household props that encourage pretend play.

Use spoons/pans in the bathtub; cups/teapots/dolls; small rakes/shovels. While playing, be sure to talk through your actions (see #’s 1, 2, 3).

Verbally interacting with your child simply means taking every opportunity to talk with your child. With our busy lives, interactions between adults and children are often directive (“do this,” “do that,”) or negative (“stop hitting,” “don’t run.”) Try to break this pattern whenever possible. Both you and the child will have pleasant experiences and you will be helping to develop oral expression and vocabulary.

WIT & WISDOM PARENT TIP SHEET

WHAT IS MY KINDERGARTEN STUDENT LEARNING IN MODULE 1?

Wit & Wisdom is our English curriculum. It builds knowledge of key topics in history, science, and literature through the study of excellent texts. By reading and responding to stories and nonfiction texts, we will build knowledge of the following topics:

Module 1: The Five Senses

Module 2: Once Upon a Farm

Module 3: America Then and Now

Module 4: The Continents

In this first module, we will study the five senses. Studying the five senses lays a foundation for knowledge of human biology. We will learn how we see, hear, taste, touch, and smell as we ask the question: *How do our senses help us to learn?*

OUR CLASS WILL READ THESE BOOKS:

Picture Books (Informational)

- *My Five Senses*, Alik
- *My Five Senses*, Margaret Miller
- *Rap a Tap Tap*, Leo and Diane Dillon

Picture Books (Literary)

- *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault; illustrations, Lois Ehlert
- *Last Stop on Market Street*, Matt de la Pena; illustrations, Christian Robinson

Articles

- "Great Depression," Children's Encyclopedia
- "The Harlem Renaissance," Brian Brown

OUR CLASS WILL WATCH THESE VIDEOS:

- "Bojangles Step Dance"
- "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom"
- "Eight-Year-Old Tap Prodigy Little Luke"

OUR CLASS WILL EXAMINE THESE PAINTINGS:

- *Flower Day*, Diego Rivera
- *Le Gourmet*, Pablo Picasso

OUR CLASS WILL ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

- What are our five senses?
- How do people use their senses to learn about the world?
- How does CJ use his senses to learn about the world in *Last Stop on Market Street*?
- How do our senses help us learn from *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*?
- How do our senses help us learn from *Rap a Tap Tap*?
- How do our senses help us learn?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT HOME:

As you read with your Kindergarten student, ask:

- *What do you notice and wonder?*

BOOKS TO READ AT HOME:

- *Geraldine, the Music Mouse*, Leo Lionni
- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* Bill Martin Jr.
- *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* Bill Martin Jr.
- *The Listening Walk*, Paul Showers
- *Drum Dream Girl*, Margarita Engle
- *Hello Ocean*, Pam Muñoz Ryan
- *Rain*, Manya Stojic
- *Owl Moon*, Jane Yolen
- *Snowy Day*, Ezra Jack Keats

- *Little Fur Family*, Margaret Wise Brown
- *Every Second Something Happens: Poems for the Mind and the Senses*, Christine San José
- *Ada Twist, Scientist*, Andrea Beaty
- *No One Saw*, Bob Raczka

PLACES YOU CAN VISIT TO TALK ABOUT THE FIVE SENSES:

Visit an art museum or art exhibit together. Take time to look at the art and ask:

- *What are you wondering about the five senses after looking at this art?*
- *What do you notice?*
- *What's happening in this work of art?*
- *How do people use their senses to learn about the world?*