

October 16th, 2000

Dear Parents,

Today your child is bringing home a Book Worm Book Bag. This bag will include a reader that is part of the *Invitations to Literacy* program that our class is piloting and a *Book Worm Response Log* in which you and your child are invited to keep track of the stories/books that are read.



Since this is a pilot program *your* input is invaluable! I would encourage both you and your child to comment upon the reading selection and your child's experience with it (in the response log). Some of the criteria you may want to observe are:

- word recognition (Are the words simple or challenging for your child?)
- whether your child enjoyed the selection
- whether your child was able to comprehend the selection (Was your child able to answer simple questions about the story?)
- oral responses (Is your child able to answer questions in complete sentences?)
- use of phonics to decode unfamiliar words (Is your child able to "sound words out" him/herself consistently?)
- connections between the story and personal experiences

These are just some reading observation tips. If you prefer a less formal way of responding in the response log, please feel free to do so. I will be following the program in the classroom with the children in more depth.

Students will have an opportunity to sign out a book bag each Monday and will have *one week* to read the selection. They should return their book bags for collection and exchange, *and* their reading logs for every Monday. The reading selections have been provided courtesy of Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to work together to provide feedback to the publishers of our texts.

The reading selections consist of 40 titles and range from simple stories about subjects close to children's experiences to chapter books and informational texts. Stories at the beginning of the collection are short and simple with clear illustrations and strong language patterns to support beginning readers. As children grow in their ability to process text, the complexity and variety of the

stories increase as well. The books provide a balance between challenge and ease, allowing children to make successful progress without frustration. They are leveled to indicate their gradual increase in challenge.

Levels consist of:

- Early Emergent Readers (consists of 4 books; large text; simple story lines; pictures strongly support text)
- Emergent (consists of 5 books; increased text per page; introduction of question marks and simple dialogue; sentences are longer)
- Early (consists of 6 books; stories are longer; include a variety of genres such as directions, legends, folktales, humor and information; vocabulary becomes more challenging)
- Fluent (consists of 14 books; longer selections with several story events; use of paragraphs and chapters)
- Extending (consists of 11 books; longer selections with more text per page; fewer pictures; some chapters; characters and plots are developed; introduction of charts and diagrams; includes biography, folktales and legends)

At times, you may find that a reading selection that your child takes home appears to be simple for he or she to read. Please be assured that *my* focus in the classroom is upon developing, supporting and enhancing several skills simultaneously, including Oral Reading skills (e.g. reading aloud with expression, observing punctuation, expression, comprehension, decoding unfamiliar words), Oral Expression skills (answering in complete sentences, paraphrasing in own words) and Writing skills (applying reading strategies to the writing process using correct punctuation, following written directions, *demonstrating* comprehension through written activities).

Thank-you for your continued support!

Partners In Education,

K. Walkowiak