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## Meadowbrook Elementary School

*A Reggio influenced learning community*

February 2015

Dear Meadowbrook families

Registration for kindergarten resulted in our first ever wait-list for the Reggio influenced program of choice, which is great news for the growth of our school. Next year our population should be close to or over 200 students – a great improvement over the initially projected enrolment of September 2012 of 70 students!

Ground has been broken on our outdoor classroom – the kiosk has been cemented in and I have been assured that the log seating will be arriving soon. The kiosk will hold a detachable whiteboard /bulletin board that teachers can bring outside for instruction. Thanks to the generosity of our Meadowbrook PAC (that is all of you!) for raising the funds to support this project.

The presentation on Wednesday evening at Hillcrest – Making Sense of Anxiety – was well attended and full of relevant information. The Hilltop schools' administration worked together to bring Colleen Drobot of the Neufeld Institute to speak about anxiety and separation issues that impact our children; we hope that many of you found the information helpful.

As you must be aware, all the classrooms in the school have been - or are in the process of being – painted. The painters should be finishing up before spring break. Our students and staff have been very flexible during room changes and disruption – thanks to them for making this process as smooth as possible. The classrooms look so refreshed by the first new paint for about 20 years!



The district gymnastics equipment is coming this week and we are so grateful to have new mats in our gym. Thanks to our PAC for all the work that went into getting them for us. Please be aware that your child's PE classes will involve learning how to be safe with the equipment – ensure that he/she wears appropriate clothing for tumbling and climbing.

Speaking of clothing – please ensure that your child of any age has extra clothing at school. As you know, students go outside rain or shine and many of our older students get as wet as the kindergarten children. Extra socks, pants and shirt will go a long way to keeping your child comfortable if they get splashed or rained on.

Parking continues to be a serious issue. Please remind your child(ren) not to walk through the parking lot – there are still people who are driving into the staff lots as our students come to or leave school. You only have to look at the bent fence post by the Strong Start room to know that visibility is limited when you are backing up in the staff lots. The pickup and drop off section of the road is for that purpose only – please do not leave your car parked there while you walk your child to school. When there is no safe space for drivers to pull over and let their children exit the car, drivers are stopping on the crosswalk or beside another car, endangering their child.

On **February 23** at 1p.m. the Axis Mime Theatre will be presenting Hamelin: A New Fable in our gym. Everyone is welcome to attend!



On **February 24** the photographer will be back here to do class photos, as well as the whole school shot if weather permits.

**Pink day is on February 25** - if your child has a pink shirt, please encourage him or her to wear it.

**PINK SHIRT DAY**

**Early dismissals at 2pm are scheduled for March 4 and 5.** This is to provide additional time for parent, student and teacher conferencing. Your child's teacher will be providing you with more information as to the format closer to the date.



Our school has started recycling compostable food items as directed by the district. This initiative means that we will decrease the amount of waste going into our garbage. We are asking that students bring home garbage like foil or plastic wrappers so that we can also try to reduce the amount of litter that ends up on our playground.



### **How parents can support self regulation at home**

Over the past few years, it has become evident that it is just as important to teach children to regulate their emotions, thoughts and behaviours as it is to teach academic skills. Students with the ability to self regulate can pay attention to classroom activities, ignore distractions, remember directions and resist impulses. All of these skills give them an advantage in the school environment.

Self regulation comes in many different forms. Emotional self regulation is important for helping kids manage how they experience and express emotions. Behavioural self regulation helps them demonstrate control over their actions – taking turns, not calling out. Cognitive self regulation helps students follow rules and plan appropriate responses (like listening during show and tell).

We can all agree that self regulation is important to student success and there are many ways that parents can support the development of these essential skills.

### **Provide good nutritious food at home and at school**

- proteins generally increase alertness
- complex carbohydrates have a calming effect
- simple sugars and processed foods result in a rapid increase in energy level but are then followed by fatigue and lethargy
- avoid foods high in saturated fats. Consumption of these leads to sluggishness, slow thinking and fatigue.
- water is extremely important for optimal functioning of the digestive, neurological, musculoskeletal, circulatory and urinary systems.

### **Provide adequate exercise**



- getting up and moving increases levels of serotonin, a neurotransmitter responsible for alertness and a sense of well being
  - increased cardio pulmonary fitness correlates with increased energy and mental alertness
  - studies show that increased “screen time’ is associated with obesity and decreased energy levels
- parents that are physically active tend to produce children that are physically active due to modelling of that lifestyle

### **Ensure that your child gets enough sleep**



- different children have different sleep requirements
- sleep requirement change with age – during periods of rapid growth i.e. adolescence, your child will require more sleep
- if your child does not wake up to greet the day with energy and enthusiasm, he/she is not getting enough sleep

### **Have a structured routine**

- having a structured routine at home can result in a child who is less anxious, better able to transition and who can separate from the family more easily.
- a structured routine is very calming to students who might be anxious or worried that that might ‘miss something

### **Model Self-regulated behaviour**

- it is important for adults/parents to model the use of self-regulation vocabulary
- when adults are not self-regulated, it is important for students to see them employing techniques to get themselves back into a ‘just right’ zone

- Children often see their parents ‘up regulating’ with coffee, music etc. to wake up but rarely see them ‘down regulate’ when they are overwhelmed, angry or frustrated.

**Spend time connecting with your child**

- research shows that sensory strategies and/or cognitive strategies alone will not result in the ability to self-regulate
- relationships between children and their parents is incredibly important in ‘connecting the dots’ for children regarding body state ( physiology) emotions and behaviour. Talk to your children about how it feels to be calm, relaxed and alert and help them to recognize how their body feels as well as how they feel emotionally when they are in this state. Talk about strategies that work to get them back to this state when they are unengaged/ sluggish or overwhelmed/frustrated.

developed by Lynda Swain, OT SD43. Feb 2013

