

WALT WHITMAN MONTHLY



The Power of Connecting to Your Child

Dear Walt Whitman Families:

One of the single most important behaviors we can engage in as parents is to form an emotional connection to our children.

However, this can be a dangerous and winding road especially when our own adult emotions get the best of us.

Former Brown University Psychiatry professor, Kate Roberts, Ph.D., states that, "Children can develop motivation to change in

response to a strong connection with an adult." In her article, *Savvy Parenting*, she provides a few practical solutions to stay connected to your child, while offering some *do's* and *don'ts* that we, as parents, fall victim to.

Dr. Roberts points out that it is important to understand that, "...Children do not have the cognitive or emotional capacity to appreciate the importance of making positive behavior changes

and thus they do not have the inherent motivation required to change." She goes on to state that, "...Real change happens as a result of a strong connection between child and parent and the child developing an inherent desire to act differently to please the parent as a result of their connection."

To read the full article visit:

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/savvy-parenting/201312/children-change-when-they-feel-connected-and-understood>

~Mr. Snyder, Principal



Third Grade

The third grade has been very busy this month. We are mastering multiplication and division. The strategies that we have learned have proven that there is more than one way to get a product or quotient to our mathematical problems. We have become third grade geologists and have performed several experiments to identify rocks and minerals. These experiments are actually used by real scientists when classifying rocks and minerals. During ELA, we have been enjoying some challenging read alouds. We then use our close reading skills to read these stories independently and then answer text dependent comprehension questions. After reading all of these stories, we have learned that people all over the world, want the power of reading and access to books, just like we do!



By Mrs. Trembley, Mrs. Gustafson, Third Grade Teachers



First Graders Celebrate the Holidays with Family!

First Graders Celebrate the Holidays with Family

(我愛我的家 wo ai wodejia)

December is the holiday season and there is no place like home for the holidays. The first grade students have been engaged in learning the topic of family in Chinese throughout the month of December. Traditional and modern Chinese families were compared to American families. Students were impressed with one important Chinese custom in which younger siblings call older siblings by "older brother" and "older sister," instead of their birth name. Students had the chance to practice this traditional Chinese custom through a guessing game. They also learned the song and poem of Family members. The whole lesson has been integrated as students made their own traditional Chinese house and named their family members.

Come along and practice these familiar family words with us!!

Grandfather (paternal side): 爺爺 yeye
Grandmother (paternal side): 奶奶 nainai
Grandfather (maternal side): 外公 waigong
Grandmother (maternal side): 外婆 waipo
Father: 爸爸 baba
Mother: 媽媽 mama
Older brother: 哥哥 gege
Younger brother: 弟弟 didi
Older sister: 姊姊 jiejie
Younger sister: 妹妹 meimei

By Mrs. Cheng, Chinese Teacher



Why Handwriting Matters

Handwriting is more than a fine motor skill-it is also a key for overall literacy development. Research shows that handwriting wires the brain for learning (Zaner-Bloser 2013). When children are able to form letters quickly, fluently, and correctly, they have more attentional resources that can be devoted to planning and constructing a written composition. Here is an interesting video which supports this research:

<http://news.fiu.edu/2012/01/good-handwriting-and-good-grades-fiu-researcher-finds-new-link/34934>

In this digital age, it is hard to “get back to the basics” of using our hands to produce written forms of self-expression. It is of critical importance, however, that parents and teachers continue to foster legible handwriting. Here are some ways you can improve your child’s writing at home and also make writing tasks more fun!

1. Be creative in how you get your child to write. Ask your child to make a shopping list before going to the grocery store or write down the cookie recipe you’re doing together.
2. Don’t just write, but draw and solve puzzles too! Lots of books encourage children to draw and will help improve their manual control over a pencil. Some examples include dot-to-dots, mazes, word searches, and cross word puzzles. For a real challenge, try a 500 dot-to-dot worksheet!

3. Use a good grasp:



The best way to hold a pen or pencil is to let it rest next to the base of the thumb. Hold it in place with the pads of the thumb, index, and middle fingers.

4. Lined paper is your friend. Those lines can help your child write letters that are the right size and proportion. Be sure to fill up the lined space completely. Trace the top and bottom lines a different color so your child can distinctly see where to start and end each letter.
5. Slow Down! If your child’s writing is hard to read or he/she erases a lot, try slowing down a little. For some kids, going slower solves the problem. If you rush, it’s hard to control where to stop and start the letters, resulting in more mistakes and distractions.
6. Lower the Pressure. Some kids press down really hard when they write. That makes it harder to make the smooth

lines needed for writing, especially cursive. Try easing up, don’t grip the pencil as tightly, and let your pencil mark the paper without going all the way through.

7. Play Games. Have fun with games that can also improve handwriting by promoting eye hand coordination and dexterity such as Jenga, Perfection, and Don’t Spill the Beans.
8. Get the Right Tools. If your child is struggling with a regular pencil, try a smaller or shorter one. Ensure there is a good eraser handy to ease the apprehension of making mistakes.

“Handwriting is what registers our individuality and the mark which our culture has made on us.” (Phillip Hensher, [The Missing Ink: The Lost Art of Handwriting and Why it Still Matters](#))

Try these websites at home for more Handwriting Fun!

www.hwtears.com (writing strategies and printable practice sheets)

www.highlightskids.com (printable puzzles and games)

By Mrs. Urrutia, Occupational Therapist