

June 2019



Dear Families,

The school year is at an end, but as Lifelong Learners there's no end to exploring new adventures. I'd like to share some ways you can truly help your child make the most of the summer ahead! Many of these ideas have been adapted from a letter written by Betsy Eggart, a primary teacher who resides in Florida.

- Teach your child to tie his/her shoes. Find a fun trick! Watch a video! Give an incentive! Be persistent! Just make sure your child isn't the one dragging laces through the bathroom and mud puddles and asking the teacher to tie them.
- Keep bedtime in the routine. It may be a little later, and there will be nights that bedtime rules don't apply. Overall, if we keep our bodies in a routine with sleep, September won't hit quite so hard.
- Choose a few family members and friends to write letters to this summer. Ask your child to write in full sentences, ask questions and give details. Writing with a purpose makes it real for your child. Maybe someone will write them back! Include an envelope with a return address and stamp to encourage a response! My home address is 7020 N. Olin Ave. Portland, OR 97203. I'd be happy to receive a letter and write back. 😊
- Sit at the table and eat together. Really watch your child. Is he/she sitting on his/her knees, mouth wide open, food everywhere? This is how your little one looks at school during lunchtime, too. Work on that.
- Encourage kindness. Find someone or several others that your child can do something simple for to bring a smile. Deliver cookies, make a card, flowers, chores, a song...something simply for a smile.
- Don't rush to the rescue. Our children need us, but they need us to let them learn to solve problems, too. If your child is in a situation that is frustrating, but not harmful (example: can't put together a new toy, can't open something like a fruit cup or container, can't decide which color shirt to wear) let your child work it out! It saves time and our nerves to just do it. However, in the long run, it's crippling our children of the basic and necessary skill to problem solve and think

through an issue...for themselves. Hang back...just a bit. Your child will be ok! Remind him/her to stop, name the feeling, and calm down. We learned three different ways to calm down. Ask your child to show you (belly breathe, count, and positive self-talk).

- Read to your child and have your child read to you or a younger child. Please visit the library and make books a part of your summer days. Public libraries have summer reading incentive programs, write down ten book titles on the Holy Cross Summer Reading flyer, and please remember to log your reading minutes on the Scholastic Summer Reading website. Most importantly, let your child see you read. Use different voices for characters. Have your child tell you the best parts and predict how it will end. We tell children all the time that they must read, but are we showing them that we read?

Practice math skills, too. Look for real-life situations like at the store comparing prices, calculating miles taken during a trip, using fraction words when eating a sandwich or a pizza, measuring things to cook or make a project. Have fun with all the different ways numbers are used in everyday life.

- Put your phone down. We must look up from our screens and look at our children. They are growing so incredibly fast. We could spend this summer scrolling through Facebook and Instagram vacation pictures of other people wishing we had their reality, or we could be celebrating our own reality by running through the sprinkler in our own backyards.

- Rest. Be ok with not constantly going somewhere. Society has us believing we must seize the day and do it all. Our children have worked hard, and they need to rest. If we keep them in perpetual motion through the summer, it will feel like a continuation of the chaos without the homework. Squeeze in the fun, but allow time for rest, too. Unscheduled time gives way to creativity. Rest renews our bodies and our minds for the next school year. And as always, remember to pray. I will certainly pray for all of you.

Thank you so much for entrusting me with your precious child this school year!

Love and prayers,

Ms. DeVaney-Willkes