Language is the skill that we often take for granted. From the very first cooing sounds, babies and young children develop language at a very fast pace. And it all happens quite naturally. Right? Wrong. Children acquire language through listening, mimicking, and engaging in language-rich experiences with their parents and families. The language growth that children make during the critical first years has a lifelong impact. Children who interact in language-rich homes and start school with a large working vocabulary are more likely to be successful in school than those children with limited prior experiences and interactions with print. In other words, it is critical that children are exposed to books and print from the very start. Research tells us that children with strong word knowledge think more deeply.

Literacy and reading is a main focus in school and we foster conversations that have a deep link to print. These conversations build experiences and vocabulary that increase student’s ability to think, connect ideas and make comparisons.

At home, aside from daily reading with your child, there are strategies that you can use that will increase and deepen your child’s vocabulary:

- Use as many opportunities as possible to have conversations and model language. Describe items and colors, Think aloud as you decide what to buy in the supermarket.
- Embed new words in familiar contexts. For example, include the words measure, whisk and scramble into your breakfast routines.
- Use words that are exciting and interesting: this cookie is "scrumptious"!
- Change the language of your daily routines: instead of time to clean up, include organize or arrange.
- Share your stories of your own day, what you did, as well as the funny and interesting things. Allow your child to do the same.

Happy chatting!

Our Science Fair is a great event that celebrates inquiry, imagination and fun. And it all begins with a question. This year we will ask that all of our 1st - 4th grade students follow the Scientific Method while our kindergartners can submit a collection or display.

The Scientific Method:
- Ask a Question
- Do Background Research
- Construct a Hypothesis
- Test Your Hypothesis by Doing an Experiment
- Analyze Your Data and
- Draw a Conclusion
- Communicate Your Results

Winners from each grade level will be selected to participate at the Brookhaven National Laboratory Elementary Science Fair on May 4, 2013. Good
Even Geniuses Work Hard
Understanding the Work of Dr. Carol Dweck, Ph.D.

For the past two decades Dr. Dweck has been researching achievement, success and how to foster success. Her work has defined mindset as your belief about yourself and your most basic qualities of intelligence, talents, and personality. There are two types of mindset, the fixed and the growth.

A “fixed mindset” is the belief that our intelligence, talents or personality are what we are born with and there is no opportunity for change. Children with a fixed mindset tend to shy away from tasks that present a challenge, especially when they view the task in terms of what they have been able to accomplish in the past. Not knowing something is perceived as not having talent or being good at something. A child with a fixed mindset tends to value being smart above all other things and might avoid opportunities to learn, fearful that they won’t be successful.

On the other hand, a “growth mindset” is the belief that our most basic abilities, intelligence and talents can be developed through hard work and dedication. Children with this type of mindset are more resilient to new and challenging tasks that stretch their ability. They view complex, challenging tasks as an opportunity to learn.

Parents can help their children develop a positive mindset by being careful to emphasize the effort over the achievement. Instead of praising a child for being “so smart” and “getting it all right”, use praise and encouragement by stating how proud you are that they stuck to it, even though it was hard and that with hard work they can be successful. It’s important to reinforce that fast learning does not mean best or deepest learning. Students who take longer often understand on a deeper level.

Albert Einstein was considered an average student with a growth mindset, and we know how well that turned out!

Parents as Reading Partners Minutes Make History!

The theme this year for PARP centered around the Olympics and the challenge of setting a personal goal for minutes of reading each week, and trying to meet or beat it.

Mr. Harrington, the PTA PARP chair, led the competition and provided feedback to all of the classes each week for the leading classes on each grade level and the students who made the greatest effort to read and log minutes. Of course there were prizes for all and plenty of enthusiasm, especially when all of the teachers from the highest class on each grade level took to the relays during the PARP finale. Who knew that Mr. Dugan could race a scooter like a champion!

Of course this kind of enthusiasm doesn’t happen without parental support. From the parents reading at home to the dedicated PTA volunteers who counted and tracked all of the minutes, it was a group effort that sent a strong message to children that reading is fun!