

# Parent

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# Packet

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EVERYTHING you need to know about  
Kindergarten in Mrs. Dickens' class!!

P.S. Please keep this packet to save and refer to  
throughout the year if necessary.

P.S.S. Be sure to go take the Sunform Parent Challenge  
and let me know how you did!!



# Kindergarten



Hi! I am Mrs. Dickens, and I CAN'T WAIT to take you and your child on the adventure of a lifetime... to the land of **KINDERGARTEN!!**

Get ready for a year filled with FUN and EXCITEMENT as dreamers are born, letters come alive, and the love for learning never dies!!! It's going to be a GREAT year!

A little bit about me and my family...

I grew up right here in Sullivan, Illinois. I attended Powers, Lowe, and the Sullivan Middle School (all which have been torn down) as well as graduated from Sullivan High School. In 1994, I graduated from the U of I at Champaign-Urbana and accepted a teaching position in Sullivan. I taught Kindergarten at Powers School (where CVS is now) for 1 1/2 years, and then we all made the big move to the new school (SES) in February of 1996. I have been teaching in the same Kindergarten classroom ever since....and have LOVED EVERY MINUTE OF IT!!!

I absolutely LOVE our beautiful blended family with all my heart! Phil and I together have four gorgeous girls, Kelsie, Brittin, Kailyn, and Maddie, a son-in-law named Orry, one very sweet little granddaughter named Sadie Reese, and one handsome little grandson named Nathan. Our girls and their families are the light of our life!! We are very grateful, thankful, and blessed!

Not only have I loved watching all of our girls grow up, but I have also been lucky enough to enjoy watching over 600 kindergartners grow up as well! It has been PURE JOY, and my heart smiles every time I see, hear, or read about one of "my" kids!! This will be my 30<sup>th</sup> year teaching Kindergarten and I CAN'T WAIT to watch EVEN MORE kindergartners grow and learn!!!



# Mrs. Dickens' Daily Schedule



TIME	MIN.	MONDAY through FRIDAY
7:45-8:15	30	Unpack/Lunch Choice/ Morning Work
8:15-8:45	30	Calendar/ WIN Time
8:45-10:30	105	Wonders/OG/Sunform
10:30-10:45	15	Prep for Lunch
10:45-11:15	30	Lunch
11:15-11:35	20	Change Shoes, Bathroom Break, Sing HFW songs
11:35-11:57	22	P.E.
11:57-12:20	23	Music
12:20-1:05	45	Math
1:05-1:35	30	Recess
1:35-2:30	55	Centers
2:30-2:45	15	Extra Play Time if work is finished
2:45-3:00	15	Prepare to go home / Afternoon Message/ Dismissal



\*Please know that this will probably change a little bit throughout the year as I try and find the best schedule to fit my "K" kids needs and our new Wonders/OG curriculum.

# Wonders

SES is starting a "WONDERS"FUL, brand new to us, K-5 Reading and Language Arts Curriculum called Wonders. Every day your child will take an active role in learning and exploring their world through literacy by reading, writing, and carrying on collaborative conversations with their peers. The Kindergarten Wonders program consists of 11 Units. Each Unit is 3 weeks long and each week focuses on an essential question, a Letter/Sound, a Big Book, an interactive read aloud, 2 or more shared readings of various genres, leveled readers, decodable readers, high frequency words, comprehension strategies and skills, oral vocabulary, phonics, phonemic awareness, writing traits, grammar, and a social emotional learning skill. It pretty much covers EVERYTHING!!! My teacher heart smiled SO BIG, when I opened the Table of Contents to the first unit and the first 3 pages listed were "We Are All Readers", "We Are All Writers", and "We Are Special".

## Welcome to WONDERS!

We are so excited about how much you will learn and grow this year! We're here to help you set goals for your learning.



# Orton Gillingham

In addition to Wonders, K-3 will also be implementing something else new. It is called the Orton-Gillingham Approach, and one of its key features is using multi-sensory instruction strategies to teach reading. Research shows that when children are taught using all three pathways to the brain—visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), and kinesthetic (touching/movement) —they learn more than when they are taught through only one pathway. Simply put, the more senses we use, the more we learn. (Look at all of the learning going on below!!!! The kids are seeing the letters/words, hearing their sounds, and then touching something to make/write the letters.)



# Sunform Alphabet System

Even though SES will be doing the Wonders Reading, Writing, and Language arts program this year, I am still planning on teaching the SUNFORM ALPHABET SYSTEM that we have been using for the past 16 years. This system turns the 26 abstract lowercase letters into meaningful pictures that the children can relate to, remember, and use to help them recall each letter's sound as well as how to form it (by just drawing the "picture"). It is truly UNBELIEVABLE and I have seen firsthand how it helps ALL children learn to read, write, and spell! Once your child can isolate the beginning sounds of words (which we will do EVERY DAY during our Wonders Phonemic Awareness time), he/she will easily be able to name each letter's sound since the picture that the letter is turned into begins with its sound. The best part is that the clues are FOREVER written on each letter!! If a child ever says "I can't remember what sound lowercase d makes", I just say "What is it a picture of?" and the child says "Dog... oh now I know! Dog begins like /d/ so d says /d/!!" It is as simple as that!!! And once your child can quickly name each letter's sound, WATCH OUT, because he/she will start sounding out and reading EVERYTHING in sight!!! And THAT is one of my FAVORITE parts of kindergarten!!!



# A little video about Sunform

Just scan the QR codes below with either your phone's camera or a QR code reader app.



## Sunform Parent Challenge

Can YOU learn to read and write a new language called the KINDERBET in less than 5 minutes? I CHALLENGE YOU TO TRY!!! (P.S. Let me know how you did!)





Here is our Sunform Alphabet song/video that we sing at school every day. Now your child can sing it at home or on the go! Just scan the QR code below with either your phone's camera or a QR code reader app and ENJOY!!!! (A BIG SHOUT out to Mary Lou Sundberg for inventing such an AMAZING alphabet system that MIRACULOUSLY helps kids learn to read



*Letter sounds are all you need.*

*Put them together and you  
can read! Let's do them all!*





A — B — C — D — E — F — G

Z

## Letter/Sound of the Week

Our new Reading and Language Arts curriculum, Wonders, introduces all 52 letters of the alphabet (and their sounds) very quickly in the first 3 weeks of school during a Unit called Start Smart. Then it focuses on a letter/sound a week (sometimes 2), pausing for review, over the following 24 weeks. Kindergartners will learn to identify the uppercase (capital) and lowercase of each letter, the sound(s) they represent, as well as words that begin and end with that letter. We will be doing LOTS of phonemic awareness (playing with sounds) activities with the letter, building the letter, writing the letter, and reading words which have that letter in them!!! What I LOVE about Wonders is how every new letter/sound builds on the previous one to help children quickly learn how to blend and read words. For example, the first 5 letters/sounds Wonders introduces are Mm, Aa, Ss, Pp, and Tt. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> week, the kids can read am. By the 4<sup>th</sup> week, they can also read Sam, Pam, map, and sap. And by the 5<sup>th</sup> week, they can read 10 words including at, pat, sat, mat, and tap. 7 high frequency words have also been introduced by the 5<sup>th</sup> week of school - I, can, the, we, see, a, and like. and the authors at Wonders have done a WONDERful job writing "Decodable Readers" (books with words the kids should easily be able to sound out on their own) that include only the letters, sounds, and high frequency words that have been taught. I CAN NOT WAIT FOR YOU TO HEAR YOUR CHILD READING!!!! IT IS ABSOLUTELY AMAZING!!!

(FYI - It is VERY IMPORTANT that your child MASTERS the new letter/sound weekly and can apply what he or she has learned to blend those sounds together to read words. Please practice reading with your child daily at home.)

T

S

R

Q

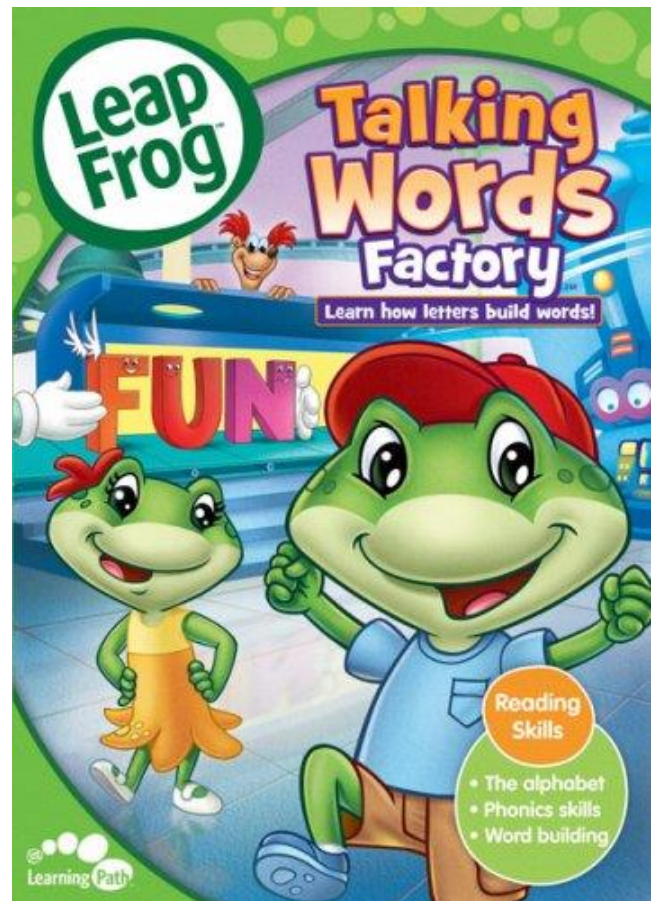
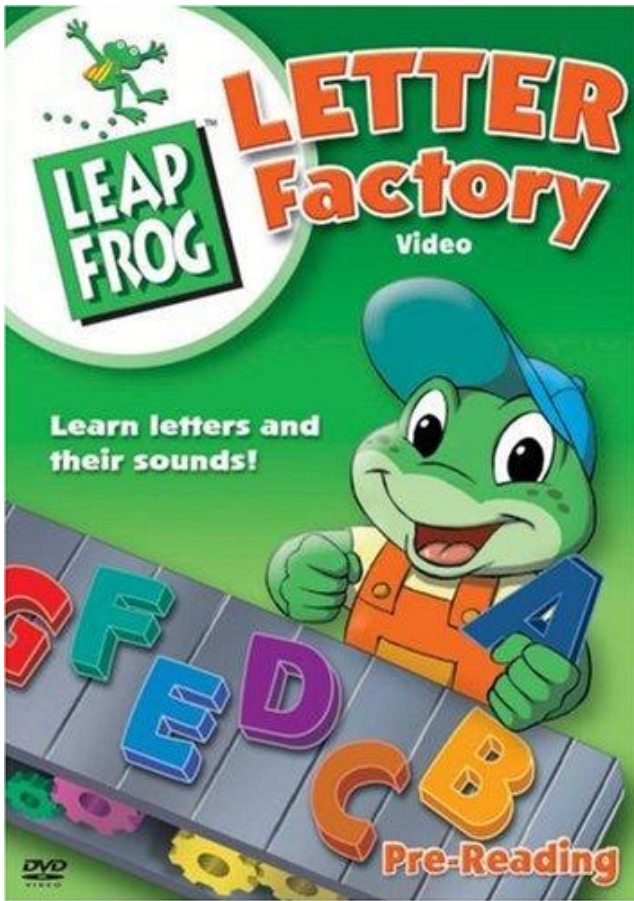
P

O

N



CHECK THIS OUT!!!! Here are 2 of my FAVORITE videos for teaching letters, sounds, and reading words!!!! I am SO EXCITED!! Just scan the QR codes below with either your phone's camera or a QR code reader app and ENJOY!!!! (I bet YOU will end up loving these videos as much as your kids do!!)



purple green gray red orange yellow  
pink black white brown blue

who  
and  
you  
do  
for  
this  
can  
are  
I  
we  
they  
of  
the  
good

## High Frequency Words

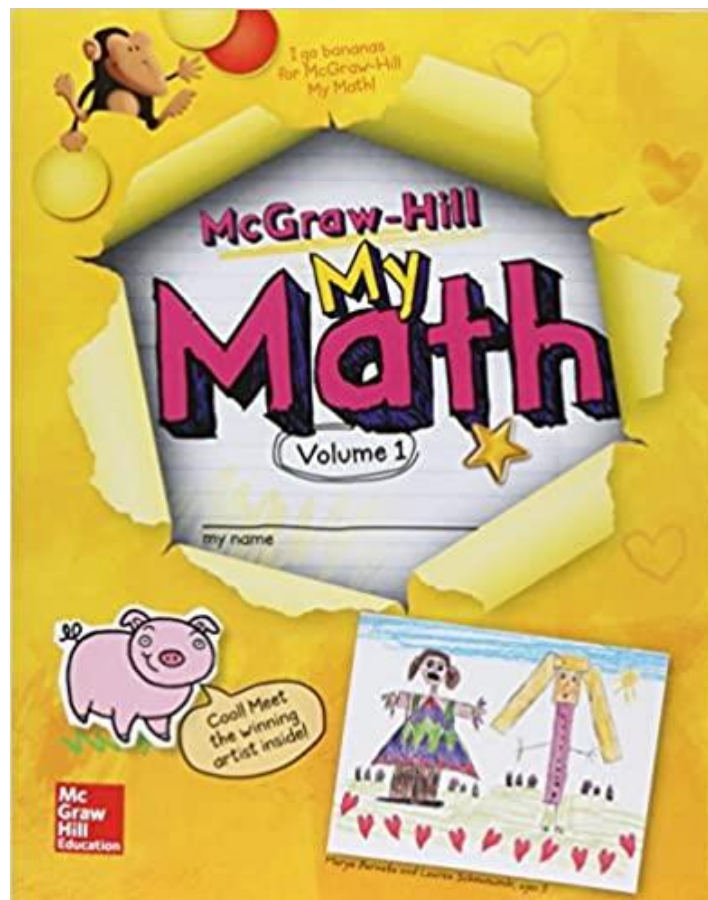
We will learn how to sing, spell, write, fluently read, and groove to 51 "high frequency words" this year in kindergarten. "High Frequency Words" (HFW) are words that we see in written text A LOT!! It is very important that our kindergartners learn how to read all of these HFW "fluently" or by "sight" (both terms mean "quickly with no hesitation"). The more words they can read fluently, the better their comprehension will become. Children who have to stop repeatedly during a story to sound out a word, easily forget what they are reading about. So please please PLEASE review all introduced words with your child daily just as we will be doing at school. Since there are 51 words to learn, we don't want anyone to fall behind. I will be making everyone 2 sets of HFW flashcards and their songs and videos (on QR codes) will also be fastened inside your child's green folder for him/her (and YOU 😊) to access and sing along to ALL YEAR LONG!!! We will be building these HFW out of everything and anything we can get our hands on here at school, and your child can do the same at home. Have your child look at the HFW on the flashcard or in his/her green folder and then use any small object like cereal, m&ms, pennies, legos etc to build the word by shaping the objects into the letters in the HFW. When finished, have your child read it, trace over it, and spell it several times. You BOTH will have a BLAST!!

too  
my  
see  
me  
is  
to  
he  
was  
play  
go  
she  
a  
has  
said  
want

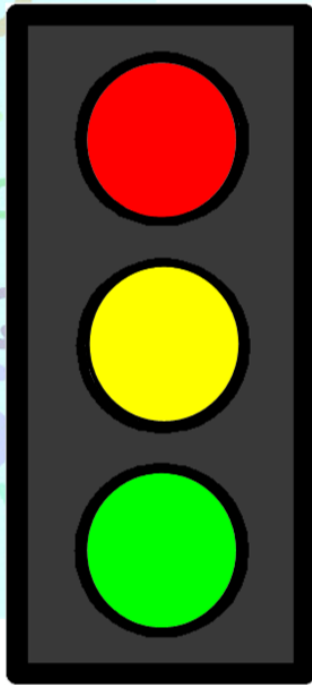
come here what help have  
where like with look does little

# My Math

Our school-wide math series is called My Math. We try hard to complete 1 lesson every day. We usually get the first 3 pages done together at school, and then take the last 3 pages home for homework. Please sit down with your child every night, have him/her complete the My Math homework, and check it immediately so your child can promptly correct any mistakes. (You may need to read the directions out loud to your child so that he/she knows exactly what to do. It literally takes 5 minutes or less.) Please do not have your child bring his/her homework back to school. Since you are checking it, there is no reason for me to check it too. I can see exactly how they are doing during the first 3 pages of every lesson. The last 3 pages they complete at home are just for extra practice. There will be many days when we don't complete a My Math lesson at all and that is OK! Usually it is because I want to do some of "MY" math instead of the school's math, and on those days there won't be any homework!! I will try to make our math as "hands on" as possible. We always have LOTS of tubs full of different math objects that the kids can play with and manipulate to help them better understand the math concepts we are working on. Throughout the year we focus on sorting, comparing, counting, patterning, graphing, more/less, symmetry, 2D and 3D shapes, spatial relationships, addition, subtraction, counting by 1s, 5s, and 10s, place value, and even word problems. (We also do a TON of math every day during calendar time...and even when talking about the lunch graph!!!)



# Discipline



For years I did this - the "stoplight" - which only focused on negative behavior. And all I heard parents say was "Every day the first thing I ask my child is, What color were you on today?"



Then I did this - which was a lot more positive, but parents were still telling me that the first thing they asked their child every day was "What color were you on today?"

I want my parents asking "What FUN things did you do at school today??!!" or "What are you learning about?" or "Show me all of the cool things in your green folder." ... NOT "What color were you on?" So.....

## Now I just do this!!!

I teach the rules over and over and over again. I try to focus on the positive behaviors I see. I praise kids repeatedly for following the rules. I have an incentive for the children as a TEAM as well as INDIVIDUALLY. Every time we, as a class, follow the rules or do something great, we receive Xs. When we have earned 100 Xs, we get to have some type of "party". The kids come up with "party" ideas and vote on them. (Some "parties" in the past have been extra recess, barefoot day, hat day, costume day, popcorn party, bring your favorite stuffed animal from home, dance party, movie party, etc.) The kids LOVE trying to earn 100 Xs!!!

100 Chart										Name
<del>1</del>	<del>2</del>	<del>3</del>	<del>4</del>	<del>5</del>	<del>6</del>	<del>7</del>	<del>8</del>	<del>9</del>	<del>10</del>	
<del>11</del>	<del>12</del>	<del>13</del>	<del>14</del>	<del>15</del>	<del>16</del>	<del>17</del>	<del>18</del>	<del>19</del>	<del>20</del>	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	

## And this!!!



Lots of times during the day I will also catch individual kids being RESPECTFUL and RESPONSIBLE and tell them to put their initials in a rectangle on the RESPECT BOARD. At the end of each week, Mrs. Guyot will call out one letter and one number from the respect board grid. The names in that rectangle get to go see Mrs. Graham and get a surprise from her!!!

# And this!!!

During the week I am also ALWAYS looking and listening for a SUPER STAR STUDENT to be next week's Student of the Week! Only children who follow the rules ALL WEEK LONG are in the running to be the next Student of the Week and get to pick one of my Build-A-Bears to take home for the weekend!!!

If a child misbehaves, I discipline them immediately. They have to sit with their head down for 5 minutes. Then, when finished, we discuss why they had to sit and what they need to do better next time. I do not keep track of behavior daily. If your child continues to get in trouble, I will contact you personally as well as document the behaviors in Skyward. If 3 or more behaviors are documented in a month, your child will be sent to the principal's office.





# Self-help skills

I have a DEAL for you!  
I will teach ALL of my kindergartners reading, writing, and math skills while you teach your 1 child how to tie shoes, zip a coat, and button/snap pants.  
That sounds like a GREAT DEAL to me!!

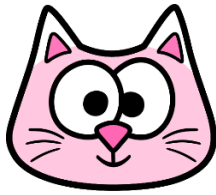


# Head Lice

Head lice can, does, and WILL appear in a classroom full of kids. Please check your child's hair often for lice. If you find any, please treat it (and your entire house) and let our school nurse know so that we can do head checks in our room and hopefully prevent it from spreading.



# Excellent EDUCATIONAL websites



## PINK CAT GAMES



<https://www.pinkcatgames.com/go/0e2DzMRI5dncQlr6zHDTvg> Above is the link and QR code to our class's pinkcatgames website. THE KIDS ALWAYS LOVE THIS WEBSITE!!! Teachers purchase a one year subscription to pinkcatgames.com and then use the website to help make up their own EDUCATIONAL, FUN-FILLED math and reading games to go along with their curriculum.

Just click on the above link, click on "Groups", and find a game for your child that will best benefit him/her. For example, if your child needs practice learning the Sunform pictures, scroll all the way to the bottom, click on the Monkey, and all of those games will help your child learn the Sunform pictures that go with each letter. If your child needs help learning letter names or letter sounds, scroll down until you find the Apple (for letter names) or the Bumble Bee (for letter sounds). If your child knows all of the letter sounds, then go find the Cat (CVC words) and have him/her start putting sounds together to read words!!!! There are LOTS of different "groups" of games based on lots of different learning levels. Be sure that your child is playing a game that is just right for him/her. There are rhyming games, number games 0-10 and 0-20, addition and subtraction games 0-5, 0-10, 0-20, and even double digit addition and subtraction games. There are also color word games, SES Kindergarten sight word games, and much much more! (If your child is really into a certain kind of game in one group that I don't have in another group, please let me know and I might be able to make that game for that group too.)

A couple years ago, I had a little girl come into kindergarten only knowing 3% of the 175 items on the report card screener. (She knew 1 letter, 4 numbers, and a triangle. That was it.) By the end of first quarter, she had learned 33% of the report card screener which was AWESOME!!! During 2nd Quarter she just soared like a ROCKET SHIP and was at 95% of the report card screener by early December. I was praising her mom and dad like CRAZY for all of the work they must have been doing with her at home. The mom told me that they didn't really have to do much with her at home because she was pretty much teaching herself everything. I remember looking at this sweet little girl and saying, "How did you get to be such a SMARTY PANTS?!?!?!?" And the little girl very confidently and proudly said, "Pink Cat Games!!!" Enjoy watching YOUR child play Pink Cat Games, LOVE learning, and SOAR like a rocket ship!

If you ever want to know a little more about Pink Cat Games, below is a link and QR code to a very detailed 8 minute video about the Pink Cat Games website that I made for my parents back in 2020. Even though the kids don't take their ipads home anymore, I know that they can still play Pink Cat Games on a phone, ipad, or desktop. Since it was already made and so easy to copy, I thought it might be beneficial to those who are interested. I promise that you will LOVE playing Pink Cat Games with your child!!

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MJTTYgKjy0sS19t1KO\\_mMEYe8emJhlqH/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MJTTYgKjy0sS19t1KO_mMEYe8emJhlqH/view?usp=sharing)





**Abcya.com** is a GREAT website for kids filled with HUNDREDS of educational games. Your child can play ALL of the games for free on a laptop or desktop computer, however he/she would need to subscribe to play most of the games on the app on a phone, ipad, tablet, etc.

<https://www.abcya.com/grades/k>



**Starfall.com** is another FABULOUS educational website for kids. Your child can play LOTS of the games for free on a desktop or laptop, but just like Abcya.com, he/she would need to subscribe to play most of the games on the mobile app.

<https://www.starfall.com/h/index-kindergarten.php>



**Getepic.com** is an ABSOLUTELY AMAZING website full of THOUSANDS of books for the kids to listen to and read themselves. EVERY child can find HUNDREDS of books that they will ENJOY!!! Epic's "Read to Me" section is my favorite because the words pop up larger on the screen exactly when they are being read so your child can easily follow along. When the story is finished, your child will have an opportunity to answer some comprehension questions which allows us to see how well he/she is listening and understanding the story.

<https://www.getepic.com/app/profile-select>



This is another video I made for the parents a couple years ago teaching them how to use the Epic app. When there was COVID/remote learning, Epic was free to everyone, but now it is only free from 7am-3pm. A paid subscription of \$59.99 for the year would be needed after 3pm (see link below). Your child can totally log in for free though during teacher institute days, sick days, or days we are on winter/spring break!! (The video is only 3:00 minutes long!)

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vk-toBxuAN\\_iSPd5TKJwsEMc63fniNKu/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vk-toBxuAN_iSPd5TKJwsEMc63fniNKu/view?usp=sharing)

Epic Family gives kids anytime access to all the best books, and for a limited time you can save 25% with my link:  
[www.getepic.com/connect/pqz3072?utm\\_source=text](http://www.getepic.com/connect/pqz3072?utm_source=text)

# Class t-shirts 😊

We plan on making class t-shirts this year. They are usually \$8 and we buy them locally! Parents can order them too BTW!!!



# Welcome to 1st Grade!

## Promotion Policy

On our report card screener it states that by the end of 4<sup>th</sup> quarter a kindergartner "must master 90% to be promoted to first grade". That means that in order for a kindergartner to go on to first grade, he or she can only miss 18 items on the kindergarten screener.  $158/176=90\%$ . Through our experience however, we, as teachers, have learned that if a child does not reach 90% until the very last week of school, they truly aren't ready for first grade. So, we do have a little "stipulation" on the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter "90%" score.

If, by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, a kindergartner has not mastered 90% of the report card screener, his/her teacher will test the kindergartner weekly throughout the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. At the end of eight weeks, the teacher will average all eight screening percentages. If the average score is 90% or above, the kindergartner may advance to first grade. If the average score is less than 90%, the child **MUST GO TO SUMMER SCHOOL OR REPEAT KINDERGARTEN**. The same stipulation will be held for summer school as well. A kindergartner must average 90% during summer school to be promoted to first grade.

(I PROMISE YOU that if you spend a little time with your child every night going through the things in his/her green folder, completing any homework, reading any books that were sent home, practicing any flashcards that he/she still needs help with, and doing anything that I have suggested, all will be JUST FINE!!!)