

May 12, 2010

Dear Sonshine Parents,

As you know, Sonshine will be adding a kindergarten class for the 2010/2011 school year. I am very pleased and excited to be teaching this class. My two education licenses are from preschool through second grade and from kindergarten through eight grade, so I'm pleased to have an opportunity to use my education to teach at yet another grade level.

I have had many, many questions from parents regarding the kindergarten for next year. So, I'd like to take this opportunity to give everyone some information on what we plan on accomplishing and how our kindergarten will be different from a public school kindergarten.

First and foremost, we will have a much, much smaller class size than most public school kindergartens. Currently, our limit is 17 children with a teacher and an assistant. From my experience with my two sons in public school, the classes can range from 25 to 35 students with one teacher. Unfortunately, this does not allow much individualization of lessons from student to student.

Secondly, our hours will allow us to cover much more material than a public school. The typical public school kindergarten sessions last about two and a half hours. Our school day will be from 8:45 until 2:00, which gives us over five hours with the students.

This extra time with the students will allow us to do many extra projects, while still covering everything that the Nevada Department of Education requires us to teach, as is outlined in the Nevada Kindergarten Standards. Some examples of what we will be covering with our extra time are:

- **Small group and individual reading instruction** - My son Joel's "small" group at the public school consists of 16 other students. That is our entire class at Sonshine's kindergarten!
- **Books, books, books** - We will be creating many class books and reading and creating even more individual books. Depending on the writing ability of the class in December/January, we would like to have each child write and illustrate his/her own book and submit it to PBS's young author's contest.
- **Child-guided projects** - Based on the children's interests, we will facilitate in-depth projects, as outlined in the Reggio Emilia style of teaching. Projects I have implemented in the past include architecture, painting styles and famous artists, fairy tales, and animal habitats. If you would like more details about these exciting projects, please stop by my classroom. I would love to share them with you.
- **Math** - We will be using lots of manipulatives, games and math journals to problem-solve our way through math. Like all other subjects, we will make math fun and "trick" the children into learning.

- **Field trips** - We would like to take 2-3 field trips throughout the school year, including one to a pumpkin patch and one to a park with woods where we can look for signs of life of animals and plants.
- **Bible teachings** - We will be focusing on one Bible story a week, as well as learning a weekly Bible verse.
- **Family events** - We would like to implement a Father's Night in the winter and a Mother's Day Tea in May. As always with Sonshine, we will have a Christmas event and a year-end party.
- **Pen pals at a nursing home** - While this is still in the works, we are currently working with a local nursing home to allow each child to "adopt" a grandparent. The children and the senior will exchange letters and hand-drawn pictures throughout the year. We would like to visit our senior friends a few times throughout the year. Not only does this project cover many language arts standards, but it also will give the children an opportunity to show kindness and to be an example of Christ's love.

I hope that I have addressed most of questions that you may have about our kindergarten plans. I am so very excited to have this opportunity to teach kindergarten at a school whose leaders value high-quality education. This commitment to quality is apparent in the decision to offer an all-day kindergarten with two teachers and seventeen children.

I wish you and your family the best as your child moves into kindergarten. If you have any questions about Sonshine's kindergarten, please do not hesitate to stop in my classroom and chat with me.

Thank you,

Jacki Angus  
Sonshine Teacher