



Dear Parent or Guardian,

This year I am excited to introduce the *Making Meaning*[®] program to your child. *Making Meaning* is a reading program designed to help children build their reading comprehension and social skills. The children hear books read aloud and discuss the stories with partners and as a class. This year your child will learn several comprehension strategies such as *retelling*, *visualizing*, and *wondering/questioning*. The program is helping our class become a community of readers by making everyone feel welcome and safe. In addition, each child in our class reads books that are at his or her reading level for up to 20 minutes every day. This part of the *Making Meaning* program is called Individualized Daily Reading (IDR).

At the end of each unit in the *Making Meaning* program, you will receive a letter telling you about the most recent reading comprehension strategy and social skill your child has learned. Each letter will also include ways to support your child's home reading life.

Our class just finished the first unit of the program, which focuses on the children's reading lives. The children talked about what they like to read, heard stories read aloud, and discussed those stories. The children also learned to make connections between the stories and their own experiences. The program calls this reading comprehension strategy *making connections*. When children make connections between the stories they hear and their own lives, they are able to understand the stories better.

During the first unit, the children also practiced the social skill of listening carefully to others. Listening well to others is a skill that helps students learn and become active members of the reading community.

Here are some ways to build your child's reading life at home:

- Make weekly trips to the local library to borrow books.
- Set aside a time to read together every day.
- Stop every so often while reading aloud to discuss what you both are wondering about the story.
- Model good listening by paying attention to your child when the two of you discuss the story.

Reading and discussing books is one of the most important gifts you can give your child. I hope reading together every day can be an enjoyable time for you and your family.

Sincerely,



Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our class just finished the second unit of the *Making Meaning*[®] program. The children love the stories we are reading! During this unit, the students continued to practice the comprehension strategy *making connections* by hearing and discussing stories and finding connections between the stories and their own lives. They also answered questions to help them understand the stories they heard.

During this unit, the children also practiced the social skill of talking and listening to one another. Listening well and talking to others are skills that help students learn and become active members of the reading community. One powerful way to build your child's ability to listen and talk is to pay attention to your child when the two of you talk about stories.

You can help your child make personal connections to stories. Before reading, ask your child to listen and think about what in the story is like his or her own life. While reading, stop every so often to ask questions such as:

- How do you think this person or animal feels?
- Have you ever felt that way? Tell me about it.

Another way to help your child think about a story more deeply is to ask questions while reading aloud, such as:

- What has happened in the story so far?
- What do you think will happen next?

Have fun reading, talking, and listening to each other!

Sincerely,



Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our class just finished the third unit of the *Making Meaning*[®] program. During this unit, the students focused on using *retelling* as a strategy to help them understand what they read. Using the sequence of events to retell a story (remembering what happens first, next, etc.) is a way for readers to make sure the story makes sense to them. Retelling also helps readers talk about stories with other people.

You can help your child practice retelling by stopping from time to time while you read aloud to ask questions such as:

- What happened in the part of the story you just heard?
- What has happened in the story so far?
- What happens at the end of the story?

You can help your child learn how to retell stories by recalling parts of the story together after you read. If your child forgets parts of the story, reread the story and discuss what happened first, next, and how the story ended.

Have fun reading, retelling, and listening to each other!

Sincerely,



Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our class finished the fourth unit of the *Making Meaning*[®] program. The students love the stories and poems we are reading! During this unit, the students visualized to make sense of the stories we read. *Visualizing* means making mental images while reading. Readers might imagine sights, sounds, smells, tastes, sensations, and emotions. Visualizing helps readers understand, remember, and enjoy reading.

The children also practiced the social skill of talking and listening to one another. Listening well and talking to others are skills that help students learn and become active members of the reading community. One powerful way to build your child's ability to listen and talk to others is to pay close attention to your child when the two of you talk about stories.

You can help your child practice visualizing by stopping every so often while reading aloud and asking questions such as:

- What did you see in your mind as I read to you?
- What words did you hear in the story that helped you create that picture in your mind?

In addition to stopping and discussing the story with your child, you might:

- Ask your child to close his or her eyes as you read and get a mental picture of the story.
- Give your child the opportunity to draw what he or she visualized, and then talk about the drawing.

Have fun reading, visualizing, talking, and listening to each other!

Sincerely,



Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our class just finished the fifth unit of the *Making Meaning*[®] program. During this unit, the students continued to use the sequence of events to retell stories they heard. They also used *wondering* to help them understand and enjoy stories. *Wondering* and *asking questions* about texts helps readers actively engage with stories and remember what they read. Socially, the students further developed their ability to share ideas with one another.

Before reading aloud to your child, look at the cover of the book together, read the title, and talk about what your child is wondering about the story. You can support your child's understanding by stopping every so often while reading to ask and discuss questions such as:

- What has happened so far in the story?
- What are you wondering about the story right now?
- What do you think might happen next?

Talking about stories after you read together can help deepen your child's understanding. I hope you and your child continue to delight in reading!

Sincerely,



Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our class just finished the sixth unit of the *Making Meaning*[®] program. During this unit, the students explored the difference between fiction and nonfiction. They used the strategies *making connections*, *visualizing*, and *wondering* to help them make sense of nonfiction texts. The students also explored some of the features often found in nonfiction texts, such as tables of contents, indexes, photos, and diagrams. Nonfiction texts give readers true information about a topic and can include not only books but also other kinds of informational texts, such as magazine articles, recipes, baseball cards, menus, and game directions.

You can support your child at home by collecting nonfiction texts that interest your child, talking about what you both learn from nonfiction you read aloud, and talking about nonfiction texts you encounter throughout the day, such as street signs, food labels, and playground rules.

Before reading aloud a nonfiction text to your child, it is helpful to ask questions such as:

- What do you think you know about [snow]?
- What do you wonder about [snow]?

Consider stopping every so often during the reading to ask what your child is learning and what he or she is still wondering about.

After reading, you might ask questions such as:

- What did you learn about [snow] from this book?
- What did you learn that surprised you?
- What are you still wondering about [snow]?

I hope you and your child enjoy learning together about topics of interest to both of you.
Happy reading!

Sincerely,



Dear Parent or Guardian,

We have come to the end of our school year and the end of the *Making Meaning*[®] grade 1 reading comprehension program. The children have shown great enthusiasm for the variety of texts we read aloud and the conversations we had about reading. They eagerly explored a number of reading comprehension strategies, including: *retelling*, *making connections*, *visualizing*, *wondering*, and *exploring text features*. The use of these comprehension strategies strengthened the children's reading comprehension skills and should continue to be a source of support for them for years to come.

In the last unit of the *Making Meaning* program, the students thought about the books and stories they liked this year and considered the strategies that helped them understand the stories.

While reading with your child this summer, you might reflect on the reading comprehension strategies your child used this year. This will help your child continue to use the reading comprehension strategies.

Remember that the more your child reads, the more successful he or she will be as a reader. During the summer, read aloud to your child and encourage your child to read independently every day.

I hope you have a great summer filled with books, fun, and enjoyment.

Sincerely,