

# The **A B C**'s of Sure Start

A Handbook for Mrs. Benavides' Class  
August 2007

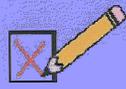


## **Appropriate Dress**



Please ensure your child wears weather-appropriate clothing and shoes to school. We will be outside for outdoor play on fair weather days, so your child should wear comfortable and active clothes. Sunscreen must be applied at home. Hats and sunglasses are encouraged for the playground. Please send your child to school in clothing that is appropriate for outdoor play as well as messy art activities. Girls wearing dresses are advised to wear shorts underneath due to the fact that we do a lot of floor activities.

## Attendance



A successful school experience is the responsibility of the child, the parent, and the school. Your child's progress, both academically and socially, is influenced to a great extent by daily participation. Regular attendance without tardiness is a key. Children can come to class at 0845. If your child is ill, please call the office (768-9501) and inform us of your child's absence. This is for your child's safety. If a student must leave early for a doctor's appointment, go to the office to sign him out before coming to class to pick him up.

## Arrival and Dismissal



Pupils should arrive at 0845. Students should not arrive prior to this time since supervision by the school staff is not available. Afternoon dismissal is at 1420 from the sidewalk by the front office. Please pick up your child promptly. If you are late, look for your child in the office.

## Art



We will do a lot of art activities as part of our curriculum. Donation requested: We are currently looking for old, button-down long-sleeved shirts to use as smocks for our art center.



## Backpacks



To help your child carry messages and information to and from school, you are asked to provide a backpack. Students will be given a Daily Folder for me to send notes and information to you and for you to send notes to me. Please have your child remove the notes and papers from the Daily Folder to share with you daily.

## Behavior Management System



The primary focus of my classroom management system is positive reinforcement. This means that I will emphasize examples of positive behavior. Our class rules are posted and we will spend the first weeks of school reviewing them as a class. All the rules are based on the value of respect for yourself, others, and your environment. I encourage you to discuss the class rules with your child.

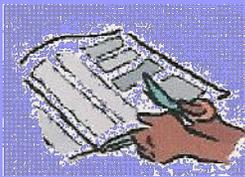
- I will take care of my school.
- I will use a quiet, inside voice.
- I will keep my hands and feet to myself.
- I will leave a safe space when walking.
- I will walk when I am inside.
- I will use a whisper voice in the bathroom.
- I will clean up the things I take out.
- I will raise my hand to share a thought.

## Birthdays



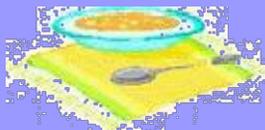
Birthdays are special occasions for young children. If you wish, you may send a special treat to the class for your child's birthday (cookies, cupcakes, or frozen popsicles are the most convenient). Please notify me a day or two in advance so that I can give you an accurate class count and may reserve time in our school day for your child's special treat. Please do not send birthday party invitations to school unless the entire class has been invited. Although it may seem convenient to distribute a few invitations by sending them to school, it often results in young children having hurt feelings if they are not invited.

## Book and Software Orders



Every month I will send home a Scholastic Book Club Catalog for you and your child to look over. The catalogs are provided as a convenient way for parents to buy quality, developmentally appropriate books and software at low prices---what a great way to build your home library! If you choose to order, please make the check payable to Scholastic Books. Orders usually arrive two weeks after the due date.

## Breakfast



Please send your child to school prepared to learn by feeding a healthy breakfast every morning.



## Calendar



A calendar of classroom events will be stapled into your child's Daily Folder, and the monthly school breakfast/lunch menus are available at our school's intranet website. Please check it often to keep up with important information.

## Change of Clothing



Accidents of all sorts happen at school. It is a must that your child has a change of clothing at school. The extra change of clothing should include an outfit, underwear, and socks. The clothes should be in a sealed Ziploc bag with your child's name. Dirty clothes will be sent home the same day in your child's backpack. Please send a clean set with your child the following morning.

## Change of Routine for Student



Please notify me in writing of any changes in your child's routine. This includes NOT riding the bus home, alternate pick-up person, alternate/new daycare provider, new emergency contacts, new work and home phone numbers, deployments, etc. The more I know, the better I will be able to help your child at school.

## Communication with the Teacher



Teacher/Parent communication is extremely important to your child's school success!! However, during school hours, my attention must be on my students and I am unavailable for conferences. If you would like to contact me, I encourage you to send me a note in the daily folder or email me at [Sonia.Benavides@pac.dodea.edu](mailto:Sonia.Benavides@pac.dodea.edu) and I will get back to you as soon as I have a chance. You may also leave a message at 768-9501. If you would like to schedule a conference, please contact me using one of the above listed options and we can coordinate a time.

## Computer



We are fortunate enough to have two student computers in our classroom. We use a variety of age-appropriate programs that reinforce math, readiness, and reading skills. Children will work on the computers during center time.

## Conferences



Parent/Teacher conferences are held at the end of the first grading period. You will receive your child's report card and we will discuss your child's accomplishments, strengths, and overall progress. Please feel free to schedule additional conferences at any time throughout the year if the need arises.

## Cooking in the Classroom



We love cooking in our classroom. It is a good way to show children there is a valid reason for learning to read, measure, and follow directions. Monthly, your child will receive an ingredients request letters, requesting ingredients for upcoming cooking projects. I always try to give as much notice as possible, and try my best to make requests fairly so that no one family is continually burdened with supplying ingredients.



## Daily Schedule



0845-0900	Unpack and Snack
0900-0930	Circle Time
0930-1030	Centers and Workgroups
1030-1110	Outdoor Centers
1110-1115	Story Time
1115-1120	restroom break
1120-1140	lunch
1140-1145	restroom break
1145-1300	Quiet Time
1300-1400	Indoor and Outdoor Centers and snack
1400-1415	Pack Up and Wrap Up
1415-1420	walk to the front of the school



## E-mail

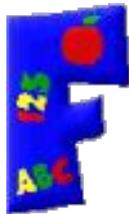


You can contact me at [Sonia.benavides@pac.dodea.edu](mailto:Sonia.benavides@pac.dodea.edu). I check my email periodically throughout the day.

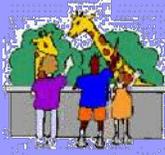
## Emergency Card



Please complete and return the information sheet promptly. If your home or work phone numbers change, please inform me so you can be located quickly if an emergency occurs.



## Field Trips



We plan several field trips that are both fun and educational for the children. We often need parent volunteers on the trips and chaperones will be chosen on a first come, first served basis. Please return permission slips as soon as possible after they are sent home.

## Fire Drills



Fire drills are held on a monthly basis throughout the year. All students will participate and are expected to walk quickly and quietly to their designated exit. Please help by explaining to your child that a fire drill is NOT real...it is simply a drill so that we can practice what to do in the event of a real emergency.

## Fundraisers



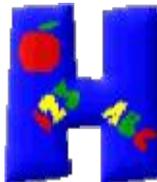
In order to raise money for school activities or educational materials, each class collects Box Tops. Please send box tops to school!! These programs generate significant revenues that help fund projects to enrich your child's learning experience. As motivation, treats are provided to students who collect box tops for our classroom.



## Great Intranet Resources



Our school has an intranet website where you can access information pertinent to Daegu American School. It includes lunch menus, sports schedules, and teacher information. You will also be able to get to our class web site through this service. Look for more information and a web address from our educational technologist, Mrs. Vail.



## Hands-on Learning



I feel that the best way to help children learn is to make learning fun. Important concepts can be learned by doing meaningful hands-on activities. There are times when seatwork is required and necessary, but for the most part, our classroom will be an active learning environment.

## Health



Please let me know of special circumstances which may affect your child. These could include medication that may make him sleepy, a death in the family, etc. Also, please let me know of any allergies your child may have, especially food allergies. We sometimes cook or do food activities to complement lessons in kindergarten and it would be helpful to know when I plan our recipes.

## Homework



Each month, your child will receive a homework calendar. It will include a daily activity to complete with your child. These activities will relate to our curriculum and should not last more than 5-10 minutes. Students will not be turning in any homework; instead, I will only be checking for parent initials. Students, who complete these activities with parental validation, will receive a prize on Fridays.

## Home Reading Program



Beginning in January, the children will begin taking home one book a night to read at home. This is wonderful practice to build reading fluency and to reinforce the vocabulary words they've learned. When they return the book to school, they will read to me and I will send another book home. This is your child's chance to "show-off" their developing reading skills to parents, relatives, and friends!



## Illness



The question of when to keep your child home from school is often a difficult one, especially when decisions must be made first thing in the morning. It is important, however, to keep your child home if he/she is ill. This helps to make them more comfortable and prevents others from becoming ill. Children function more effectively in the classroom when they are healthy.

## Independent Reading



Because children learn to read by reading, they need plenty of opportunities to read independently. Sufficient time and appropriate materials are necessary to develop and strengthen reading abilities. By giving the children time to read both at school and at home, we can work together to provide a literature-rich environment and a life-long love of reading.



## Journals



One strategy that will be used to help convey the vital concept that "print conveys meaning" is the frequent use of journal writing. In these journals the Sure Start students combine their emerging writing skills with their drawing skills. As the children are exposed to a variety of phonics and reading experiences, journal entries will move from drawings to more "inventive" spellings and conventional writing.



## Kindness



Students in our classroom are encouraged and expected to treat all members of our class as well as others with kindness and respect. Bothering others, bullying, and interrupting learning will not be permitted.



## Library



The children go to the library once a week. In the library, Mrs. Husler will teach the students library basics and entertain them with a story before book check-out. Books can be checked out for one week.

## Learning to Read

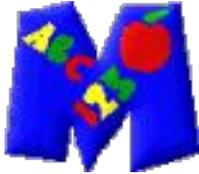


Children practice reading and writing skills while the teacher works with individual children or small guided reading groups. The center activities are designed to strengthen letter/sound knowledge, listening skills, oral language expression, rhyme, letter formation and cooperation.

## Lunch



Lunch is from 1120-1145 daily. Parents will have the opportunity to join us during this time to fulfill your Parent Participation obligations. Lunch is served "family-style", which means that we encourage conversations as we pass dishes, serve ourselves, and eat.



## Math



The kindergarten mathematics curriculum provides students with mathematical experiences that help them develop number sense and a positive attitude towards mathematics that will continue through their school career and their lives. We employ a hands-on, problem solving approach.

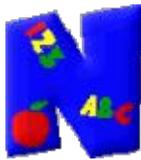
## Money



If there is an occasion that you must send money to school with your child, please follow these steps:

1. Send it in a sealed envelope or Ziploc baggie, labeled with your child's name.
2. Write the purpose of the money (lunch money, book order, t-shirt, yearbook, etc.) on the envelope/baggie.

It is imperative that this procedure is followed!! Loose, unlabeled money will get lost in our classroom.



## Newsletter



A class newsletter will be sent home every Monday to keep you updated on classroom happenings. If you'd like to post an announcement for the entire class to read, please let me know!

## Nurse



We are very fortunate to have such a wonderful school nurse! Mrs. Chandler will tend to minor scratches and scrapes, as well as sudden illnesses. For more serious injuries, she will contact you. Please be sure to send in any change of contact numbers in case she needs to get in touch with you.



## Open House



We will have a short Open House on Tuesday, September 11th, from 1400-1430 so the children can see the classroom before the first day of Sure Start. If you have not already turned in your supplies, extra change of clothing, and nap towel, please bring them on this day.



## Parent Involvement



The Sure Start program requires parents to participate in our classroom as a condition of enrollment. Thirty hours per parent are required for each participating family. In two-parent families, each parent is expected to contribute their time equally. To facilitate the volunteer process, the school will send a letter to the base commander explaining the need for parental involvement, enlisting their support in allowing parents to meet this obligation.

As a busy teacher, I count on my class parents to provide the extra manpower needed to do many of the special projects the students enjoy. We have many special activities throughout the year, but we also need help with lunch service. Please visit our Parent Involvement board to sign up for parent participation time.

## Playground Procedures



Please review these playground safety procedures with your child:

1. No rough play. Play safely.
2. Do not leave the playground until the teacher calls you to line up. At that time, it is necessary to follow the teacher!!

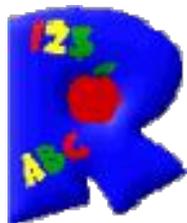


## Questions



Since we are all new to Daegu American School this year, I'm sure that you may still have some unanswered questions. Please feel free to write a note or email me at

[Sonia.benavides@pac.dodea.edu](mailto:Sonia.benavides@pac.dodea.edu)



## Recess



The children will play outdoors for a significant amount of time each day (unless it is raining). Please keep this in mind when helping your child to select clothing for the day. If your child is too sick to play outside, he is too sick to come to school. There is no lunchtime supervision available for children to stay indoors at lunch.

## Restrooms



We are fortunate to have restrooms in our classroom. Your child may go at anytime, except nap time, so please encourage your child not to "hold it" but to go when he feels the urge to go.

## Rest Towels



The Sure Start curriculum includes a rest time of at least 60 minutes each day. Please send a clean rest towel and blanket for your child each Monday. It may be kept in your child's cubby during the week, and all linens will be sent home on Fridays for laundering. Please label the linens with your child's name. (Due to space considerations, no large pillows will be allowed.)



## Shared Reading



Shared reading is an interactive process used with the whole class. As the teacher reads a story, children join in on phrases or words that they know. During subsequent re-readings, children read more and more of the text, until they are able to read the story independently. Shared reading is an opportunity for the teacher to model conventions of print and the use of reading strategies.

## Show and Tell



Children will be assigned a day to share a special item with his/her classmates. Please see the weekly class newsletter for the schedule of "sharers". The item your child brings to school can be a toy, book, stuffed animal, picture, etc. Please help you child practice what he/she wants to say.

## Snack Schedule



We will be serving a morning snack from 0845-0900 every morning and an afternoon snack at about 1330 every afternoon. Please send a water bottle (labeled with your child's name) for snack time.

## Supplies



A supply list can be found at AAFES. Remember that you only need to label personal items, like coats, sweaters, umbrellas, blankets, towels, water bottles, and backpacks.



## Transportation



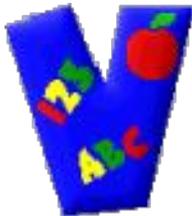
Each child who rides a bus must have a bus pass and carry it each day. I strongly suggest securing it to your child's backpack zipper with a key ring so that it will not come off. Children will be placed on their busses unless I receive a note/phone call/e-mail from you stating otherwise!! Car riders and walkers will be dismissed at 1420 and will only be released to a prearranged caregiver.



## Unique



Sure Start students learn that they are special and unique. They will have opportunities to describe how they are alike as well as different from others. They share their culture and learn about different cultures within the class.



## Visitors



Daegu has a policy that ALL GUESTS (including familiar faces) are required to check in at the school office and wear a name tag. Daegu welcomes and encourages family involvement. It is important to remember that while this may seem inconvenient to frequent visitors, it is the goal and responsibility of the school to create a safe learning environment.



## Water Bottles



Since we spend a significant amount of time outside each day, it is imperative your child brings a water bottle to school each week. They will come to school on Mondays and will be sent home each Friday to be washed and sent back to school. **Please label your child's water bottle with a permanent marker** since so many bottles tend to look alike. If your child is ever missing a water bottle, you will receive a phone call requesting permission to buy your child a water bottle from the cafeteria. (They cost \$1.00, and you can pay me back the next day.) Or, you are always welcome to send your child with \$1.00 on Mondays so he/she can buy a water bottle from the cafeteria.

## Wish List



Throughout the year we sometimes need supplies above and beyond our classroom materials (such as baby food jars or toilet paper rolls.) These needs will be posted in the class newsletter. Extras items that you think we might be able to use are always welcome!

## Writing



Our writing program builds on what each child already knows. Writing begins with scribbles and proceeds to lines and circles, random strings of letters, and eventually words and spaces. If possible, please provide your child with writing tools, such as pencils, crayons, markers, and paper at home.



## Xtra Special Kids

We have 8 children in our class. Please keep this in mind when sending in things to be distributed to the whole class.

(Okay, okay, so this "x" word is a bit of a stretch, but I couldn't come up with anything else...)



## Younger Siblings



It is in your child's and the program's best interest to have our parent volunteers available without younger children. This not only allows your full attention to be focused on the class, but also allows for some special time between you and your Sure Start child. Thank you for making childcare arrangements for younger siblings.



## Zzzzz



Make sure that your child gets plenty of rest. Setting and keeping a bedtime is a wonderful gift you can give to your child. It will help them to be alert and ready to learn each day!