



Oak Tree Elementary School

The Monroe Public Schools, in collaboration with the members of the community, shall ensure that all students receive an exemplary education by well-trained, committed staff, in a safe and orderly environment.

Principal's Newsletter January 2024

Dear Oak Tree Families,

A solid foundation in Math is essential for students to be successful in school and beyond. Often, educators are asked what parents can do at home with their children to strengthen Math skills. Math skills can be incorporated into your family's daily life without a lot of time, effort, or expense. Here are some fun ideas:

- Cooking is a terrific way for your family to bond, but also practice using fractions, as you measure and cut or double recipes. The best part is you get to eat your creations together.
- Bring a calculator to the grocery store so children can add up how much you are spending or saving with coupons.
- On a long car trip, ask children find license plates with pre-determined target numbers.
- If your child is trying to save money to make a special purchase, keep a chart of how much money they will need and what they have saved.
- Classic board games such as Yahtzee and Monopoly reinforce Math skills such as adding and reasoning.
- Of course, the computer has a wealth of activities that help us to practice newly learned skills, from games to apps. Mrs. Amendola shares so many with us each month.
- In the garage children can learn to use a tire gauge to measure the pressure in their bicycle tires and determine how much more is needed.
- If you love to sew, have your children measure and sew fabrics together - even if it is just for fun.

- Most important, enjoy the special time together as your children grow and learn each day. Don't press your child to move too quickly or take the reins if they are struggling. This can develop gaps of understanding. Allow them to put on his or her critical thinking cap, but do ask extra questions

On behalf of the Oak Tree staff, I want to wish you a safe, healthy, and joy filled New Year! Many many thanks for your contributions to our Holiday Gift Drive! We were overwhelmed by your generosity and kindness!

Kindest regards,

Patty Dinsmore



CURB THE SPREAD OF GERMS THIS WINTER

Handwashing: Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family against the spread of germs. Use soap and water to lather your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails. It is important to scrub for at least 20 seconds. If you need a timer, hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.

Proper Cough & Sneeze Technique: Covering coughs and sneezes can help prevent germs from spreading. Teach your family to cover their mouths and noses with a tissue when they cough or sneeze and immediately throw the tissue in the trash. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow and not your hands.

Cleaning & Disinfecting: Practice routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces around your home like doorknobs, light switches, faucets, and countertops. Cleaning with soap and water reduces the number of germs, dirt, and impurities on a surface, while disinfecting products kill germs on surfaces.

A MESSAGE FROM MRS. MC NUTT



Winter Safety Tips

As we approach the colder winter weather, please see the attached tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

What to Wear

- Dress infants and children warmly for outdoor activities. Several thin layers will keep them dry and warm. Don't forget warm boots, gloves or mittens, and a hat.
- The rule of thumb for older babies and young children is to dress them in one more layer of clothing than an adult would wear in the same conditions.
- Blankets, quilts, pillows, bumpers, sheepskins, and other loose bedding may contribute to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and should be kept out of an infant's sleeping environment. Sleep clothing like one-piece sleepers or wearable blankets is preferred.
- If a blanket must be used to keep a sleeping infant warm, it should be tucked in around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as your baby's chest, so the infant's face is less likely to become covered by bedding materials.

Hypothermia

- Hypothermia develops when a child's temperature falls below normal due to exposure to colder temperatures. It often happens when a youngster is playing outdoors in extremely cold weather without wearing proper clothing or when clothes get wet. It can occur more quickly in children than in adults
- As hypothermia sets in, the child may shiver and become lethargic and clumsy. Speech may become slurred and body temperature will decline in more severe cases.
- If you suspect your child is hypothermic, call 911 at once. Until help arrives, take the child indoors, remove any wet clothing, and wrap him in blankets or warm clothes.

Frostbite

- Frostbite happens when the skin and outer tissues become frozen. This condition tends to happen on extremities like the fingers, toes, ears and nose. They may become pale, gray and blistered. At the same time, the child may complain that his/her skin burns or has become numb.
- If frostbite occurs, bring the child indoors and place the frostbitten parts of her body in warm (not hot) water. 104° Fahrenheit (about the temperature of most hot tubs) is recommended. Warm washcloths may be applied to frostbitten nose, ears and lips.
- Do not rub the frozen areas.
- After a few minutes, dry and cover the child with clothing or blankets. Give him/her something warm to drink.
- If the numbness continues for more than a few minutes, call your doctor.

Winter Health

- If your child suffers from winter nosebleeds, try using a cold air humidifier in the child's room at night. Saline nose drops or petrolatum may help keep nasal tissues moist. If bleeding is severe or recurrent, consult your pediatrician.
- Many pediatricians feel that bathing two or three times a week is enough for an infant's first year. More frequent baths may dry out the skin, especially during the winter.
- Cold weather does not cause colds or flu. But the viruses that cause colds and flu tend to be more common in the winter, when children are in school and are in closer contact with each other. Frequent hand washing and teaching your child to sneeze or cough into the bend of her elbow may help reduce the spread of colds and flu.
- Children 6 months of age and up should get the influenza vaccine to reduce their risk of catching the flu.

Ice Skating

Allow children to skate only on approved surfaces. Check for signs posted by local police or recreation department or call your local police department to find out which areas have been approved.

- Advise your child to:
 - Skate in the same direction as the crowd
 - Avoid darting across the ice
 - Never skate alone
 - Do not chew gum or eat candy while skating.
- Consider having your child wear a helmet while ice skating.



Sledding

- Keep sled riders away from motor vehicles.
- Children should be supervised while sledding.
- Keep young children separated from older children.
- Sledding feet first or sitting up, instead of lying down head-first, may prevent head injuries.
- Consider having your child wear a helmet while sledding.
- Use steerable sleds, not snow disks or inner tubes.
- Sleds should be structurally sound and free of sharp edges and splinters, and the steering mechanism should be well lubricated.
- Sled slopes should be free of obstructions like trees or fences, be covered in snow, not ice, not be too steep (slope of less than 30°), and end with a flat runoff.
- Avoid sledding in crowded areas.

Snow Skiing and Snowboarding

- Children should be taught to ski or snowboard by a qualified instructor in a program designed for children.
- Never ski or snowboard alone.
- Young children should always be supervised by an adult. Older children's need for adult supervision depends on their maturity and skill. If older children are not with an adult, they should always at least be accompanied by a friend.
- All skiers and snowboarders should wear helmets. Ski facilities should require helmet use, but if they do not, parents should enforce the requirement for their children.
- Equipment should fit the child. Skiers should wear safety bindings that are adjusted at least every year. Snowboarders should wear gloves with built-in wrist guards. Eye protection or goggles should also be used.
- Slopes should fit the ability and experience of the skier or snowboarder. Avoid crowded slopes.
- Avoid skiing in areas with trees and other obstacles.



Sun Protection

- The sun's rays can still cause sunburn in the winter, especially when they reflect off snow. Make sure to cover your child's exposed skin with sunscreen.

Fire Protection

Winter is a time when household fires occur. It is a good time to remember to:

- Buy and install smoke alarms on every floor of your home
- Test smoke alarms monthly
- Practice fire drills with your children
- Install a carbon monoxide detector outside bedrooms

American Academy of Pediatrics, 1/12

SafeKids, 11/105

Holiday Food and Gift Drive

Many thanks to our very generous Oak Tree families and our Oak Tree Student Council under the guidance of Ms. Guerrero for the successful and overwhelming response to our Holiday Food and Gift drive. Thanks to their efforts in coordination with the Monroe Township Office on Aging many of our families were able to have a warm and wonderful holiday season.



Give Kids a Smile Day

The New Jersey Dental Association sponsors the Annual Give Kids a Smile Day/Month in February. This year the kickoff day is February 2, 2024 for **The Give Kids a Smile Month**. All children in New Jersey who do not have dental insurance are eligible for a free dental exam and care for the entire month of February. The dental exams are by appointment only. The Give Kids a Smile Month website is www.njda.org/gkas and all information about locations and appointments can be found at this site.

FALCON LEADERSHIP WINNERS

Demonstrating compassion and outstanding citizenship, these four students were selected by their grade level teachers to win the Falcon Leadership Award. Each student received a certificate, a leadership medal, a special gift, and their names placed on a hallway bulletin board and our outside digital sign. Congratulations to:

December 2023

K	Shyra Bhansali
1	Yohan Musurnur
2	Shriyaan Pendyala
3	Jaashritha Chereddy



DATES TO REMEMBER:

January

2	School Reopens
4	Picture Retakes
11	Falcon Leadership Recognition Ceremony
12	4 Hour Session/In-Service Student Council Snack Sale Harlem Wizards Kickoff Assembly
15	School Closed
19	Harlem Wizards versus Staff Game
29	Jump Rope for Heart Kickoff Assembly
30	Zuzu African Acrobats Assembly

COUNSELOR'S CORNER



I hope everyone had an enjoyable winter break. In January, we will focus on our new word of the month which is, "Commitment". For our students, we define commitment as "sticking with things, even when they are hard, and never giving up." A new year is a great time to focus on this value of always trying our best in everything that we do. Parents can encourage the value of commitment in many ways too. Tell your children about examples in your own lives, in which, you stayed

"committed" to your goals and kept trying even when things were difficult. Discuss ways and strategies that help us "stick with things" such as asking for help when needed, thinking positively, and trying different ways to accomplish our goals. When children hear examples such as these from adults, it helps remind and encourage them that they too can do the same. Each classroom will receive another guidance lesson this month related to January's value of commitment.

Our Mindful Practice for January is Coping Skills. Mindful Coping skills means paying attention to how you feel and noticing when you need to use a coping skill to feel better. We can use strategies on our Resources Google site found here:

<https://sites.google.com/monroe.k12.nj.us/oaktreeresources/home> such as breathing exercises, art, calming music, exercise, etc. When we are in school we can use things in the "Relaxation Station" or any other positive strategy and notice how our thoughts and feelings may change.



RIDE WITH CHARACTER



Congratulations to Bus 9 for being awarded December's Bus of the Month as part of our positive behavior bus incentive program, which ties directly to our Rising Stars program. Each Oak Tree student received a certificate of recognition and two star tickets. We are so proud of them!!!

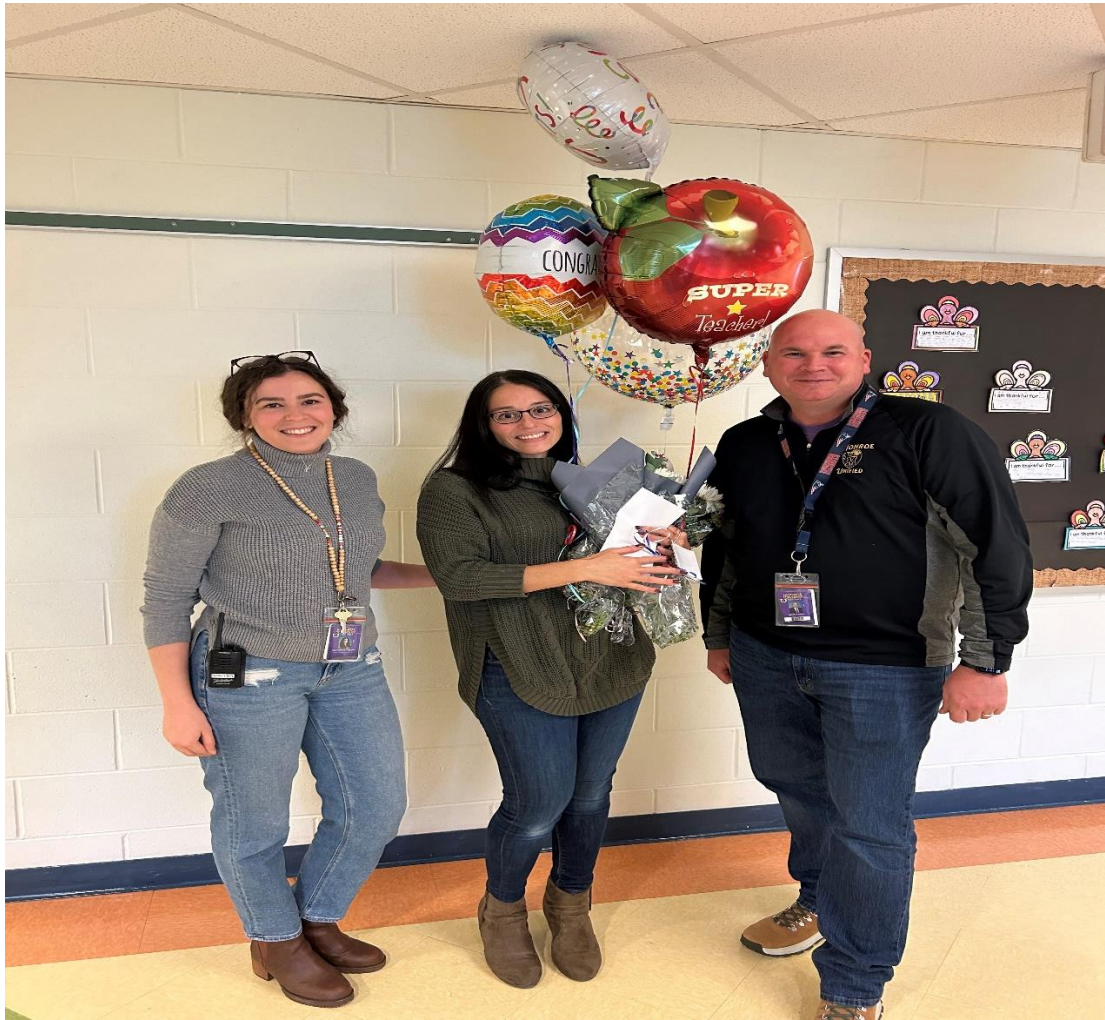
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Mrs. Michelle Ferguson, Oak Tree's Educational Support Professional of the Year. Mrs. Ferguson is our 10 month office secretary at Oak Tree. We are so grateful for all she accomplishes each day for staff and students alike. Congratulations Mrs. Ferguson!



TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to special education teacher, Mrs. Carmela Faulkner, for being named Oak Tree's Teacher of the Year! We are so proud of her and appreciate all she does for our school community. She is an invaluable member of our school. Congratulations Mrs. Faulkner!



EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Mrs. Pam Crivera for being recognized as Oak Tree's Educational Services Professional of the Year. Mrs. Crivera is our ESL Paraprofessional and a valued member of our staff. We appreciate all she does for our Oak Tree Community. Congratulations!



Kids Heart Challenge

We are thrilled to announce that Oak Tree will be participating in our 11th annual American Heart Association's Kids Heart Challenge on February 14th & 15th. Information will be sent home January 29th. Please feel free to contact Mr. Boukema and Mr. Kendall with any questions.

