Dear Parents,

I want to let you know of an approach to teaching that I use. It's call the Responsive Classroom approach. It's being used successfully by elementary teachers all around the country to create learning environments where children thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

The responsive classroom approach was developed by classroom teachers. It emphasizes teaching children to take care of themselves, each other, and the school environment so that everyone learns at his/her best. You'll notice our class paying attention to how students treat one another throughout the day. You'll also see a strong emphasis on students setting goals for their own learning and taking responsibility for reaching those goals.

Guiding Principals

The Responsive Classroom approach is based on theories of how children learn and on the experiences of classroom teachers. There are seven basic principles behind this approach:

*Learning social skills is as important as learning academic skills.

*How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand.

*Children gain knowledge most effectively through social interaction.

*To be successful academically and socially, children need to learn a set of social skills that include cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self control.

*Knowing the children we teach-individually, culturally, and developmentally-is as important as knowing the content we teach.

*Knowing the families of the children we teach and inviting their participation is essential to children's education.

*How the adults at school work together is as important as how skillful each individual teacher is: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

Teaching practices

Some Responsive Classroom practices I'll be using in our classroom this year include:

*Morning Meeting: gathering the whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead.

*Rule Creation-helping students create classroom rules to ensure an environment that allows all class members to meet their learning goals.

*Interactive modeling-teaching children expected behaviors through a unique modeling technique.

*Strategies for responding to misbehavior-stopping misbehavior quickly and respectfully so that positive behaviors are restored.

*Guided Discovery-introducing classroom materials using a format that encourages independence, creativity, and responsibility.

*Academic choice-increasing student learning by allowing students teacher-structured activities in their work

*Classroom Organization-setting up the physical room in ways that encourage students independence, cooperation, and productivity.

*Working with families-creating avenues for hearing parents insights and helping them understand the schools teaching approach

*Collaborative Problem solving-using conferencing, role-playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students.

Please let me know if you have any questions. You can also learn more about Responsive classroom at www.responsive classroom.org

I look forward to a productive and joyful year with your child!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Rasmussen