



Your little one is officially a Blossom!

Hello Parents,

Welcome to the Blossoms Classroom. I have much to share with you about our amazing school year ahead. I'm excited about the summer program, and look forward to working with your child closely and planning their goals for the new school year. I am thrilled with all the growth your child has made as a Bloomer, and I can't wait to see just how much they will grow as a Blossom! I should you have any questions or concerns, feel free to email me at HLababit@harmonoaks.com or speak to me in person during afternoon hours (for quick questions & weekly updates).

This year, your children are going to experience much more structure and greater expectations from their teacher than ever before. After years of teaching children and working with children, both older and younger, at Harmon Oaks we realize that children are capable of learning much more than we expect, but that they need the opportunity, the presentation of material, the support, and the encouragement.

While academics is a very important focus in the Blossoms' classroom, emotional and social development hold the same importance, if not more. Our children are expected to be respectful, kind, have empathy, express feelings with words, find comfort in sharing ideas and participating in class, and grow comfort in leadership roles that require much self confidence.

Behavior and following rules in class is also an area in which I place much emphasis. I use non-verbal cues to correct behavior in order to limit interruptions to class discussions and circle time. After a non-verbal cue, I only give one verbal warning and ask if the child needs some time to rest and reorganize their thought and energy. At the second verbal warning, I ask the child to rest and come back to class after they have refocused their energy, put on their "thinking cap", and are ready to learn. At that point, when they feel they are ready, an apology is made to the class and the class forgives the child and welcomes him/her back to class. This works to further develop self-regulation and also places focus and importance on learning, and what it means to be "ready" to learn, instead of placing focus on the negative behavior.

Everyone is so excited to finally be a "Blossom" and be in the "oldest class," as they should be. Being a Blossom means spending a year learning, playing, having fun, finding and sharing excitement in accomplishments, and culminating their experience at Harmon Oaks. This year is bittersweet, it's the beginning of the "end." Please read the following pages to find out just what I expect this year, from each child, and from each parent.

Being a Blossom means many things:

- Being the oldest and **brightest** children in the school
- Having lots of responsibilities
- Being a leader
- Being a reader
- Doing homework (but not consistently in the form of packets until the second term)
- Practice writing ideas, thoughts, and words in their very own literacy notebook!
- Writing a sentence on the sentence board each week by the end of the school year! (Accelerated Readers)
- Getting ready for elementary and kindergarten (Big Kid School)!
- Graduating in June and celebrating our last official day as preschoolers at Harmon Oaks with a ceremony and a party!

Your child is not the only one that will be a Blossom, **you will be a Blossom Parent**, and this change means many things as well:

- Get visibly excited and support learning by asking questions, having conversations, and most importantly being involved in your child's daily learning and growth
 - Visit the literacy board every Monday and Friday (starting in September) with your child upon pick-up to look at what they've written!
- Homework is their work, but requires your support and encouragement!
 - Homework will be assigned very sporadically through the month of April. In April, packets will be sent home to allow your child and you, as a parent, to adjust your daily routine to include homework time!
 - Do homework with your child at home, but let them do their work independently; be the onlooker, the supporter, the explainer, but please don't cut out the assignment for them, color, paste, write, etc. I want to see your child's true abilities after each assignment, so let them grow confidence in their own abilities by also acknowledging their growth. If you are asked for help in writing, hold the pencil or marker with your child's hand underneath and have them help you move the writing tool with you using verbal direction
 - Make sure homework is completed and returned on time (returning homework is more of mommy's and daddy's responsibility for now than your little ones.
 - In March we will begin sight words with accelerated readers (my hope is for all of them to become accelerated readers). Children and parents will receive a color packet with sight words. Each week each child will be tested on a color and should they have a passing rate of 100%, they will be assigned the next color sight word set. After each color sight word set they'll receive a certificate for their huge accomplishment. Should they complete each color by the end of the school year, they'll receive a **literacy MEDAL** for their amazing effort and hard work!

- **Supporting LITERACY at home:**
 - Read each night and try to sound out short words with your child (i.e. me, he, it, see, run, etc.). Talk about vowels having two different sounds. If your child was in my literacy group last year, make an effort to have a few favorite level 1 books at home to have your child lead reading with you.
 - Play “i spy” in the car! play “I’m thinking of” during dinner! “I’m thinking of something that’s an _____ (animal) that starts with the letter D.” Second clue, “it ends with the letter G.” DOG! You’re actually helping them grow their phonetic awareness by playing a simple game.

- **Support MATH at home:**
 - Children at this age can grow a sharp knowledge of basic math concepts. They have the ability and capacity of adding and subtracting. While this usually begins in the last few months of kindergarten and start of first grade, year after year, my children have shown that they too are able to understand place value, decode values and identify numbers through the hundreds (and some thousands), read measurement (inches, feet, temperature, monetary identification, etc.), and begin basic multiplication foundations (counting in tens and fives). You can support their growth at home with little prior planning: i.e. by talking about age and identifying more or less, older and younger before attending a birthday; by asking them what time it is and having them read the time on your phone; by having them enter the passcode by identifying and entering larger numbers at a time- instead of “5”, “4”, “1”, “1”, say aloud “54” and “11”; by asking them to count in 10’s or count to XX as they wait for you to get something for them; by asking them to input the channel they’re searching for on the television; by having them identify which page you are on in a book, and most importantly by working on the concept of TENS- six is 4 less than 10, 11 is one more than 10, 20 is 10 more than 10 (ongoing, even when they will understand little at the start of the year).

- **Purchase tools necessary for growth**
 - You’ll need markers, wide pencils, sharpener, eraser, glue stick, and a pair of child safety scissors for home use.
 - Purchase a small whiteboard, if you do not already have one at home, to encourage writing and to build confidence (making mistakes on a whiteboard is so easy to correct, but on paper it can be more difficult and more permanent).

Upon the end of the school year, our Bloomers meet beginning year benchmarks for Kindergarten, and our Blossoms meet end-of-year benchmarks for Kindergarten (accelerated readers will exceed mid-year benchmarks for 1st grade)! With your support, our children will surpass our expectations and grow so much confidence and excitement about learning, discovery, and school!

Our kids are truly remarkable!
 ♥ Ms.Hillary