Greetings Parents,

If you are planning to join us for the ‘Pump It Up’ event, you are kindly asked to meet us at the ACS green field on Friday February 26th at 8:30. Please don’t come to your child’s classroom as we want to ensure a smooth and quick transition to the green field. The Early Years children will finish their workout by approximately 9:15. Everyone is asked to wear red for this special day. Such events are meant for parents to interact with their children and have fun together. Therefore, we urge you to put your phones away, engage with your children and enjoy the moment.

The literacy consultant, Carrie Ekey, who started working with the KG2 teachers last year and also at the beginning of this year on Reader’s and Writer’s workshop will be coming this week to continue working with the KG2 team and help deepen their understanding and refine their practices in reading and writing instructions. One of the consultant’s observations that she shared with us last year was related to fine motor skills. Please read as your home support is very crucial.

**Fine motor skills** – Children usually progress in their fine motor skills from Nursery through Preschool (KG1) to the point that they are ready to grip pencils, markers, and/or crayons with strength and stamina in KG2 and are ready for more formal type of handwriting instruction but still in a developmentally appropriate manner. I found the students in this school from KG2 – at least grade 3 to be very delayed in their fine motor development – more so than any other school I have worked with in the world. I observed a number of KG2 children struggling to hold the pencil in a way that the writing utensil was steady. In Grade 1, children were holding pencils and writing with the type of fine motor strength that I usually observe in Kindergarten. Grade 2 children still had weak pencil grips and were more at an end of Kindergarten level.

Fine motor skills are the collective skills and activities that involve using the hands and fingers (Amundson & Weil, 2001; Case-Smith & Shortridge, 1996). That is, fine motor skills are those skills that require the small muscles of the hand to work together to perform precise and refined movements. The school environment continues to provide children with all kinds of activities that strengthen their small muscles. I urge you parents as the authority at home to limit your child’s use of technological tools (ipads, note pads, smart phones, etc…) that only require swiping the screen, and replace them with hands-on activities. Also encourage them to try before approaching you for help to open bottles, do up their buttons, etc… any task that requires the use of their fingers. Working to help children develop the best fine motor skills possible at a young age helps to set the stage for success in school and at home, and more so, contributes to them feeling good about themselves.

The following is an excerpt from an article that speaks to this highly important topic.
Help Your Child Build Fine Motor Skills

Many of your child’s daily activities—like getting dressed, eating, and writing—require control of small muscles in the hands. We call these skills fine motor skills. Your child can do more things for himself when he has opportunities to practice these skills. There are lots of activities that can increase muscle strength and coordination, preparing children for more advanced skills, from writing with a pencil, using a computer mouse, or playing a musical instrument. Help your child build fine motor skills at home by providing opportunities to...

- Set the table
- Hold knives, forks, and spoons to eat
- Pour juice into a cup
- Wipe the table with a sponge
- Help with meals—stir, shake, chop, cut, and mix
- Get dressed—button, zip, snap, buckle, and fasten
- Use Velcro tabs
- Open and close containers with lids
- Cut with child-safe scissors
- Finger paint
- Use a paintbrush
- Play with playdough and clay—roll, smoosh, pat, pound, and use tools like popsicle sticks or stamps
- Draw, scribble, or write with crayons, pencils, and markers
- Crumple newspaper
- Put together puzzles
- Place pegs in a board
- Build with small blocks
- Play board games
- Play with puppets


Upcoming Events & Dates to Remember:
Feb. 26th ‘Pump it up’— ACS green field at 8:30
March 9th Teacher’s Day
March 18th Parent Coffee on ‘Curiosity’ at 8:15 in the LS Auditorium
March 25th- April 3rd Spring Break

Respectfully,
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