Greetings Parents,

Most mornings from 7:30 to 8:00 I welcome children and parents to school at the bus gate. This is a very enjoyable part of my day and it gives me energy. As I watched children entering last week I was impressed by their level of independence and their confidence, ready to face a new day attitude. Lately, I have been encouraging helpers to let children carry their own back packs. When helpers escort children to classrooms they often hang up their back packs, help remove coats and generally do things for children that we at school are trying to teach them to do for themselves. I read again and again about how important appropriate independence can be. I include the following excerpt from an article entitled “I’m Glad I’m Me.”

**Competence**

The most effective thing you can do to help your children feel a sense of self-worth is to help them achieve competence or an internal feeling of mastery or control. Every time your child does something well, she feels competent because of what she did, not because of what someone said. Here are six practical ways to help your children gain competence:

- Encourage your children to make their own choices and be as independent as possible.
- Provide many different experiences and activities for your children to experience success.
- Provide opportunities that are challenging but not too difficult or frustrating. When developing new skills, children need to practice and try things out over and over again.
- Encourage a diverse range of skills for both girls and boys. Avoid reinforcing stereotypical ideas of what is appropriate play. Pay attention to allowing and encouraging equal access to activities and skills.
- Offer many creative activities where your children can explore the process of creation and the expression of their ideas and feelings.
- Offer your children as many opportunities as possible for interacting and playing with other children and help them to figure out strategies for getting along with them.

Help us to foster competence, independence and self-esteem by making sure that children are allowed to do the things that they are able to by themselves. When we recognize the tasks that children can do for themselves and ensure that they are given time to do them we prepare them to lead happy, independent lives.

Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Emilia approach to education, talks about how
we need to build a strong image of the child. This is the cornerstone of this approach. As parents and teachers:

“It is necessary that we believe that the child is very intelligent, that the child is strong and beautiful and has very ambitious desires and requests. This is the image of the child that we need to hold.”

Those who have the image of the child as fragile, incomplete, weak, made of glass impede children’s feelings of self-worth, see them as needy and not competent. A child exposed to this image will lack the confidence needed to be competent.

Remember to join us at the parent-coffee this coming Friday at 8:15 to learn more about the EY Reading and Writing program.

On Friday, January 22nd, your child’s teachers will send with them a hard copy letter of the parent-teacher conference appointment time that will take place on February 1st.

Please note that this coming Thursday, January 21st dismissal is at 1:00 school wide. KG1 & KG2 children will be dismissed from the main BD gate.

A slight change has been made to the snack menu. Cat & Mouth will now offer fresh orange on Wednesday instead of Tuesday. So here’s the sequence of the morning drinks: Yogurt (diluted Laban) on Monday & Thursday, fresh orange juice on Wednesday, and milk on Tuesday & Friday. The adjusted menu for January was posted on the website earlier this month.

Afterschool Program at Bright Beginnings ACS

This program runs from 1:30pm until 4:00pm on school days. Our after-school program provides a stimulating and comfortable environment for children. Time is allocated for lunch, free play, arts & crafts, baking, drama, music & movement, story time, construction toys and outdoor play.

Should you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

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Upcoming Events & Dates to Remember:

Jan. 21        PD ½ day, 1:00 Dismissal
Jan. 22        Parent Coffee Session on Literacy in EY at 8:15 in the LS Auditorium
Jan. 25        Teachers’ Reflections on Children’s Learning Out
Jan. 29        New Student Interviews—No Classes for EY children only
Feb. 1         Parent-teacher conferences—No Classes for EY children only