

The Last Six Weeks of School

The year is drawing to a close. It's been a good experience for you and for the children. How can you wrap up the year with a feeling of accomplishment and pride and impart those same feelings to the children? We believe that children need the opportunity to experience "closure" to their year of learning. The experience and activities of closure can provide children with:

- A sense of accomplishment.
- An affirmation of strong community involvement and bonding—a sense of belonging to a group.
- An affirmation of their significance within their group.
- An opportunity to reflect upon and affirm their own learning process—"knowing" themselves as learners.
 - Here is where I/we began and this is where I/we are now.
 - This is what was easy for me to do. This is what was hard for me to do.
 - This is enjoyable work for me. This is work that I don't really like to do.
- A satisfaction and an appreciation for the experience of working hard at learning something. Hard work can be a positive experience.
- An overall sense of pride in oneself, one's class and one's school.
- A recognition of the fun and excitement in learning.
- An opportunity to feel ownership of their individual and group learning—empowerment.
- An opportunity to use this year's reflection as a guide to thinking about next year's work—goal setting by a reflective learner.

Following are some suggestions for ways that every teacher can work with her/his class to bring about "closure" and give the children complete ownership of their learning year.

1. Teachers begin the closure process by brainstorming with the class all the year's accomplishments, events and memories. These lists are written on chart paper.
2. The charts are displayed beautifully on a bulletin board. The children will decide how to do the display and how to make it beautiful. They might enjoy creating artwork to illustrate their accomplishments and memories.
3. Other charts of accomplishments can also be brainstormed and displayed such as "Words We Can Spell," "Books We Have Read," "Ways That We Have Helped Each Other" or "Ways That We Have Worked Together."

4. Children take charge of another display area and each child decides on one piece of work from the year that s/he would like to display. The class can decide on criteria and categories of work to be displayed. The goal of this display must be that everyone has a piece of work displayed of which they can feel proud.
5. Each child completes a “Reflection/Memory Book” of his/her own. This can be the focus of academic work during the last three weeks of school, giving the children the opportunity to be reflective about their learning. Give children a chance to think of questions they would like to answer. This should be a fun activity!
6. Children share their “Reflection/Memory Books” with the class in Author’s Circle or in a “Sharing/Representing” time.
7. Children can create games that involve information that is coming from their brainstormings or from their individual books. These games can be the activities of Morning Meeting.
8. Children find a piece of work from the beginning of the year and display it with a piece of work from the end of the year. Children share with their class verbally or in writing what they recognize they have learned.
9. Children are given the opportunity as a class to think of ways they would like to remember, share and celebrate their own learning and the work of their class. “Ownership” is the key idea!
10. The teacher writes an end of the year memo/letter to each child recognizing, affirming and celebrating the successes of that child and a trust and belief in their learning to come in the next year.

We spend a considerable amount of time preparing for the beginning of the school year. Good beginnings set the tone for the whole year. It is equally important to spend time planning for the end of the year. Good endings leave the children with feelings of accomplishment and pride in their learning—ensuring the potential for another good beginning.

THINGS I REMEMBER

Something that was exciting was: _____

Something that was hard was: _____

Something that was funny was: _____

Something that made me angry was: _____

Something I got better at doing was: _____

Something that I was afraid to do but tried anyway was: _____

YEAR-END REFLECTIONS

The thing about this year of which I'm most proud is: _____

My favorite read-aloud book this year was:

The part of the year which was hardest for me was: _____

Something I've gotten better at this year is:

Something I'd like to get better at next year is: _____

I AM PROUD

Something that I am very proud of doing in school this year is: _____

I am proud because: _____

FRIENDS, FRIENDS, FRIENDS

These are some of my friends this year: _____

This is something we liked doing together:

MY FAVORITE

My favorite reading book this year was:

My favorite read-aloud book this year was:

My favorite project this year was: _____

A way I improved in math this year is: _____

My favorite juicy word is: _____

It means: _____

A way I used the Golden Rule this year was: _____

This summer I'm going to read: _____

THINGS I HOPE FOR NEXT YEAR

Something I look forward to is: _____

Something I want to get better at is: _____

Something I want to try that is new to me is: _____

Something I worry about is: _____

WHAT I LEARNED. . .

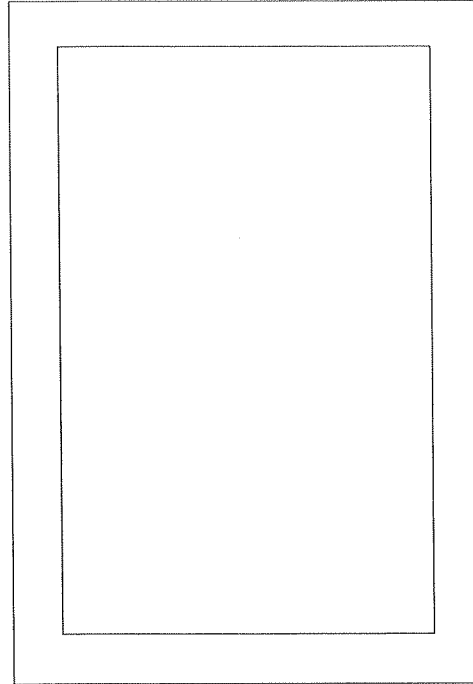
What I learned in reading is: _____

What I learned in math is: _____

What I learned from my writing is: _____

The books I published are: _____

My Year in School



The most interesting day in school this year was the day _____

The piece of work of which I am most proud is _____

(TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THIS GREAT WORK, TURN TO PAGE 2)

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My Year in School

Here is a sample of my best work:

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My Year in School

Things I remember about this year in school:

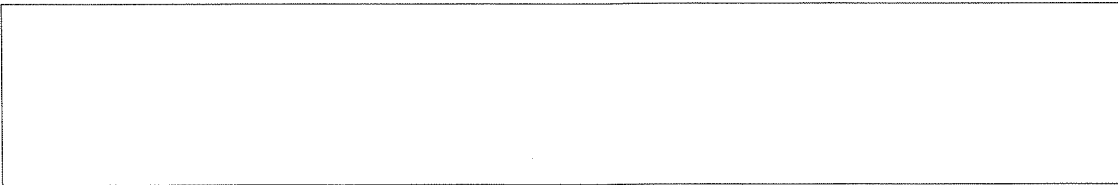
Something that was hard was _____

Something I got better at doing was _____

Something that I learned in reading was _____

My favorite book was _____

by _____



A picture of one of my favorite scenes from _____

Something I learned in Math this year was _____

Here is a sample of a hard math problem I solved:

My favorite project in Social Studies was _____

My favorite project in Science was _____

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My Year in School

Here is a sample of my best handwriting:

Here is a list of some new words I learned this year:

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

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My Year in School

Some new friends I made this year were:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I learned to solve problems I had with my friends this year by:

I remember helping the class this year when I:

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My Year in School

Next year I'm looking forward to:

I would like to thank someone at home for helping me this year with some of my school work.

That person is: _____

They helped me by: _____

Autographs

A final note from your teacher.