



ROCKING HORSE REVIEW

FALL 2009

Director's Corner

Editor-in-Chief
Linda Ashness

Dear Families,

I would like to begin by welcoming our new families to Rocking Horse. We have been open seven years and each year gets better! And to those of our families that have been with us from the beginning, welcome back to another great year.

Rocking Horse Academy prides itself on providing a higher level of education to our young children. Our staff is well-trained, educated and experienced. They have developed an amazing working relationship with each other, and their teamwork shows in what your children have learned while in our care. Our teachers are committed to providing a warm and loving environment where your child (ren) is/are allowed to explore and question life around them.

Our curriculum is developed around the students we have in our class at the time. Many students enjoy books and songs, some enjoy learning through play, others learn by experiences. Our teachers pay attention to your child's likes and dislikes while trying to incorporate that into the lessons we are trying to teach. Each classroom has a set of benchmarks we use as a foundation.

Rocking Horse Academy is dedicated to building a love of reading. That is why we try to tie each theme to several books that correspond to our lessons. Literature is a fundamental subject that has no boundaries. Please take the time to check with your child's teachers, the posted lesson plans and the newsletters for up-coming events. The more enthusiasm and involvement you show your child, the more he/she will succeed and enjoy him/herself in the process. RHA is a wonderful outlet in which to offer your skills, volunteer for field trips, collect donations for your child's class, and so much more.

As a reminder RHA will be closed September 7th for Labor Day and Columbus Day, Oct. 12th, for an

intense in-house teacher in-service training. (This is an important time that allows us to concentrate on areas for improvement and discuss new teaching techniques and activities.)

Be sure to check our August and September calendars.

CPR/First Aid Training @ 6:30pm - August 11th

Parent Date Night from 6:30pm-12:00am - August 15th

Elementary Open House - August 20th

HCISD first day of school - August 24th

Labor Day - September 7th RHA and HCISD CLOSED

Back to School Night - September 10th @ 5:30pm

Parent Date Night from 6:30pm-12:00am - September 12th

Fall Holiday Food Fundraiser - September 21st thru October 6th

Group/Class Portraits - September 22nd

Staff Training - October 13th RHA CLOSED

First Aid & CPR classes and Parent Date Night's are scheduled every month

Be sure to come to our Back to School Night and Parent Orientation, September 10th starting at 5:00pm. We use the first few weeks of our new school year to get to know you and your family, and then we open our doors to you. You can spend time getting to know your children's teachers. Your children will have lots to share and do.

Please plan to spend the extra time with us.

Once again, I would like to welcome all of our families to Rocking Horse Academy. We are excited to get to know you and your family even better. Have a great time getting to know your child's teacher and we look forward to another adventurous year.

Thank you in advance for your continued support. Comments and suggestions are always welcomed.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Eichen

(Hint- If you refer a new student to our school, we will credit your family acct. \$25!)

Extra! Extra!

Library Notes

Back to school time, and time for me to begin my annual clean-up and reorganization of the library. The library and computer lab will be closed from August 24th until September 8th. I will be cleaning, shelving, and repairing our books and computer equipment to gear up for the new school year. Please take this opportunity to return any books you or your children have checked out from the library so that I may re-shelve them. I will be back in business as of September 8th, so please feel free to drop by.

Happy Reading,
Maria Matts
Assistant Director



Tax Free Weekend

August 21st - 23rd, 2009



ANNUAL FOOD FUNDRAISER
September 21-30th

DATES TO REMEMBER

AUGUST

10th-Tuition Due

15th-Date Night

20th-Elementary Back to School Night

24th-H.C.J.S.D. Begins

24th-Tuition Due



**Check out our
babysitter list
in the lobby!**

SEPTEMBER

7th-Labor Day-Closed

7th-Tuition Due

9th-Tuition Grace Day

10th-RHA Back to School Night 5:30-6:30

12th-Date Night

21st-Food Fundraiser Begins

21st-Tuition Due

22nd-Class Photos- 9am

30th- Fundraiser Ends

OCTOBER

5th-Tuition Due

6th-Turn in Fundraiser Orders

12th-RHA Closed

17th-Date Night

19th-Tuition Due

30th-Halloween Parade (no scary costumes)



FOALS I

It is August and that means back to school. August themes are **back to school** and **me and five senses**. Our Spanish words are August--Agosto, hear--oir, see--mirar, taste--probar, touch--tocar, smell--oler. Music for August is "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" and "All the Children of the World". We will listen to the chimes and talk about smells when we eat. Our reading time includes Max's First Works, Angelina Ballerina's ABC and David Smells. The homework for August is practice scooting and crawling.

Our themes for September are **getting to know you, manners** and **I am special**. The Spanish words are September--Septiembre, thank you--gracias, please--por favor, my name is--mi nombre es. Fun music will be "If You're Happy and You Know It" and "Apples and Bananas". Our books to read are A Color of His Own, Minding Your Manners and Furry Friends. Repeat a few things for your baby to do for homework like: clapping hands, holding hands out and clicking your tongue.

Our themes for October are **stranger danger, fire prevention, fantasy**, and **fall pumpkins and apples**. Spanish words are October--Octubre, stranger danger--peligroso,

fire--fuego, pumpkin--calabaza, apples--manzanas. We will sing "Five Little Pumpkins and "I'm a Little Teapot". Touching fall leaves will be discovery and listening to nursery rhymes will be the technology. Reading time will include Julius' Candy Corn, Hey Diddle Diddle and Nursery Rhymes. The homework is to hold a toy in one hand and then the other hand. Our special activity will be to watch the fall parade of children at Rocking Horse Academy.

We look forward to the cooler days of fall. Please help us by checking your child's drawer to be sure the extra clothes are weather appropriate and still fit your growing child. It also helps to have extra formula or breast milk for emergencies.

Thank you for your confidence in us. Questions and comments are always welcome.

Foals I Staff

Mary Martha, Sonia AM staff

Patty, Ashley PM staff

Early Conversations

Time

5 to 10 minutes

Materials

None

Directions

Babies are fascinated with faces and voices, and your first communications are through the sounds you make and the nearness of your face. It doesn't matter what you say, as long as you are up close and personal, so chatter away

Extensions

Take the baby's hand and run it gently over your mouth, hair, eyes, and nose, talking about what you are doing.

Repeat, using your hand on the baby's face.

Watch carefully and repeat any sounds the baby makes, responding enthusiastically with your attention, smiles, and laughter.

Bounce the baby to the rhythm of your words, particularly as you repeat phrases and sounds.

Use nursery rhymes as you play. They have a rhythm and cadence that children have loved for hundreds of years.

FOALS II

Welcome to Foals 2! Our class is looking forward to the start of a new school year with new, fun and exciting challenges just waiting for our class to discover. As always, we work on physical development that is appropriate for this age group. Each child is in a different stage, so all lesson plans are planned with this in mind. Both English and Spanish are spoken in the class to the children throughout the day, with some sign language during the day as well. We read books everyday and sing songs to develop our brains.

August themes: 5 Senses, Back to School, School and Me, and School Rules. We will discover our senses with fun ingredients, and paint with Jello and pudding to name a couple. We will also explore the many types of textures with sand paper, corduroy and shaving cream. Babies will paint with apples, oranges and blocks. A few of our story time books include You Can't Smell a Pickle with your Ear, David Smells and Bubbles, Bubbles Everywhere. Our Spanish words are red- rojo, apple-mazana, and school-escuela.

September themes: Getting to Know You, Manners, I Am Special. We are going to have a blast with our art projects. A few of our story time books include Excuse Me, Emily's Everyday Manners, and Please and Thank You. Our Spanish words are corn-maiz and orange-arananjado.

October themes: Fire Prevention, Stranger Danger, Fantasy

and Fall Harvest *Pumpkins *Apples. Soon we will see all the beautiful colors that the fall season brings. We will also touch different types of autumn leaves. A few books we will read include, Fire Safety, Goodnight Moon, Fall Colors and 5 Little Pumpkins. Our Spanish words are dog-pero, cat-gato, and brown-cafe/moreno.

The weather will soon start changing, so please refill child's drawer with weather appropriate clothing: pants, shirts, socks, and sooner then you know it we will need a jacket or sweater for those cool mornings. Also, please remember to label everything... some of our babies may have the same outfit! Labeling will prevent loss that would include jar food, snacks, bottles and sippy cups!

We look forward to all the new things this school year will bring. Your comments, concerns and questions are always welcomed.

Foals 2 Staff

Michelle 6:30-1:30

Stephanie 1:30-6:30

Christina 7:30-1:30

Samantha 1:30-6:30

Silly Stuff

Time

5 minutes

Materials

Common household items

Directions

To encourage the development of humor, notice what your baby finds funny and repeat it. Try shaking your head and talking in a funny voice. Generally, anything out of the ordinary will make Babies laugh as long as it is not startling or loud.

Extensions

Add props like hats, glasses, and other things that change your appearance.

Try the props on your baby in front of a mirror and laugh together.

Pretend to drink out of a baby bottle.

Creep your fingers up his arm and around his other body parts.

FamilyEducation.com

COLTS

Good-bye summer and hello fall! I want to first welcome all the new families to the Colt room. We are excited for the new school year to be here. We will have with art, crafts, music, and reading adventures.

August is a very busy month. The themes for this month are **5 senses, Back to School, School and Me, and School Rules**. The first week, we will paint with our fingers for touch. We will listen to music by using our ears to hear. We will smell different scents by using our noses. At the end of the week we will have a taste test that will include the following: sweet, sour, salty and plain foods. We will read books on our senses, and we will also watch **Baby Einstein** video on what body parts we use for our senses. The second week, we will enjoy our unit on Back to School. We will sing songs about school and read **Dora the Explorer Goes to School**. We will make a backpack. We will also go over what items we use in the classroom. We are going to start learning colors, numbers, and shapes. We will make a school bus out of an egg carton. The third week will reinforce our class rules. We will practice our soft touches with our friends. We will also work on listening with our ears. Our final week, we will talk about School and Me. We will take a tour around our school and we will look at our school bus. We will also meet all the teachers around the school, the principals, and the chef. During this month we will learn the letter A and B, number 1 and 2, and the shapes triangle and oval.

In the month of September, we will talk about **Getting to Know You, Manners, and I am Special**. During these units, we will talk about what makes us special. We will make an All About Me book. This will include hand-

print, footprint, weight, height, and a drawing. We will work on our manners by using *please, thank you, you're welcome* in English, Spanish, and sign language. (Por favor, gracias, de nada) We will work on our gross motor skills by running, kicking and catching balls and climbing stairs. We will also sing *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star (Estrellita)* in Spanish. We will continue to study letters, numbers, and shapes. September 7th we will be closed for Labor Day,

October is an exciting month. We will talk about Fire Prevention. We will practice a fire drill and to Stop, Drop and Roll. We will read **Stop, Drop and, Roll**. We will sing ***Hurry, Hurry Drive the Fire Truck***. The next week will be a fun one. Fall Harvest will have many activities as we welcome the fall season. We will clean out a pumpkin and count its seeds. We will also paint apples and make an apple tree. On October 30th we will have a harvest party. You may dress up, but please no scary costumes. We will also make a wand and a crown for our fantasy week.

Just a few reminders:

- * please label everything with first and last name
- * blankets and sheets on Mondays
- * diaper bags on Mondays and Fridays only
- * water cups

Ms. Erica
Ms. Lydia

Large and Small

Materials

5-6 pairs of objects that are similar in every way except size (adult/child socks, long/short pencils, dinner/lunch plates)

Directions

Holding up the two matching items, ask your child which one is smaller.

Be sure to use terms such as bigger, smaller, shorter, and longer in your everyday conversation to draw attention to the size of objects around you.

FamilyEducation.com

PONIES

Hola from the Ponies! We are so excited that fall is right around the corner. The Ponies have been busy since our last newsletter. Not only are we reinforcing our academic knowledge, but we are increasing our verbal and social skills. Everyday is a learning adventure.

For the next three months we will emphasize the shapes: square, circle, triangle, and rectangle, plus the colors red, blue, yellow, green, white, and black. Everyday as we march along, we count from 1 to 10. Maybe you parents can help us by counting to ten each time we brush our teeth or when we wash our hands. Children learn so much faster by doing activities over and over. We will continue practicing Spanish and sign language as well.

August begins by exploring our five senses-taste, touch, smell, hear, and see. Along with that we will add the names of our body parts- tongue, fingers, nose, ears, and eyes. We can listen to Mr. Lion roar or hear the little bird chirp. We find out which sound is louder and which is softer. Perhaps we will play a tape and ask the children to identify sounds like a siren or a barking dog, even though we won't be able to see the dog bark or the sirens drive past.

Sensory tables are essential in the development of young children. We will touch warm and cold items, rough surfaces and velvety smooth surfaces, as well as hard items and soft items. We will be able to distinguish the difference between them by encouraging the children to identify the characteristics of the items by touching them. We will practice seeing by looking at magazines and books. We'll enjoy sniffing oranges, vanilla, and maybe even some vinegar.

By the end of the month we will talk about school and how we should behave. Maybe some of our Ponies have older brothers and sisters preparing to go back to school. We will sing The Wheels On The Bus and color our own school buses. All children love crayons and play dough, so we will have many art activities to keep their little hands busy and their little minds learning.

Students enjoy games, puzzles, and finger plays that help them learn their fine motor skills and visual perceptions. At this age, we encourage the children to learn using their words and sharing more. We practice walking down the hallway with bubbles in our mouths and our hands behind our backs like "duck tails". We encourage children to communicate their feelings with their words and not with aggression. "Soft touches" and, "use your words" are going to be key

phrases that we will use in class.

September delves into the theme "Getting to know you" and "I am special". We would like to dedicate this theme to building self-esteem. Self-esteem is fundamentally important to acceptable social behavior and life-long happiness. If the child believes that he/she is important and successful, he/she is more likely to be happy and successful as an adult. It's never too early to help each child find success.

In getting to know you, we want to find out what their favorite color, favorite animal, bedtime story, and family activity is. We'll ask parents to help us make a book of our favorite things. Our Spanish and Sign language words we will be working on are sit down (sientate), more (mas), eat (comer-come), please (por favor), sleep (dormir), and all done (ya termine).

October has us all fired up over Safety and Fire Prevention. Of course we practice our fire drills every month at RHA, but we want to give extra time to teach children to stop, drop, and roll. We will talk about safety in our kitchens and bathrooms, too. You might want to schedule a fire drill in your house so your little ones would know what to do in case of an emergency. Stranger Danger is another topic we work on ALL year, but especially during October.

We will learn our fall colors: red (rojo), brown (café), orange (anaranjado), and yellow (amarillo) in English and Spanish. Some of our art projects include: apple prints, leaf rubbings, nature walks, carve a pumpkin, fall leaf collecting, pumpkin seed collage, taste bud & tea party, and a fall party.

We will have more information on our fall party as the day approaches. As the weather changes remember to check your child's cubby and refill with weather appropriate clothing: pants, shirts, socks, etc. Soon we will need a jacket or sweater for cool mornings. Please remember to label everything. Sometimes when different parents pick up than drop off, they don't know what their child wore to school that day. In addition, some of us shop at the same stores and buy the same cute jacket or outfit. Label, label, label to prevent loss, please.

Thank you so much, your help is greatly appreciated.

We look forward to a great year with you!

CHARGERS I

Summer is almost gone and fall is around the corner, and we can't wait to explore our new adventures.

August themes: *5 Senses, Back to School, School and Me, School rules.*

We will read stories like Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See!, Polar Bear, Polar Bear What Do You Hear! To explore our taste and touch, we'll cook up a special treat.

Our *Back to School* unit will start with getting to know or renewing friendships, and we can't forget some discussions about our class rules to ensure safety for all students. Of course, we want all children to love coming to school, so during our week on *School and Me*, we can talk about going to school while parents go to work, and we will read stories like Don't Forget to Come Back. In a special art project, supplies will be passed out for our parents-child project to make a family tree to show anybody and everybody in our beautiful family. Don't forget pets, grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins, godparents, or best friends.

In **September** we discuss and work on *Manners* like "Yes, Please", and "No, Thank you." Of course we model these every day, but we will pay special attention to them in September by discussing the importance of good manners every day. We will watch the video *Pooh Learns His Manners* to help children understand. Another September theme is *I am Special*, which we will introduce by reading stories like "The Color of Me", that teaches us that there is always beauty within us all.

In **October** we begin Fire Awareness Week. The Kyle Fire Department will come for a visit so the children can visit the fire truck, hear about fire safety, and earn special badges. Let's not forget the stop, drop, and roll technique if you ever have your clothes catch on fire. It's a good time to organize a fire drill at home, too. It's very important that you practice this often so your child will know what to do in case of an emergency. We have a fire drill every month at RHA so our children know exactly where to go and how to behave in case of an emergency. Stranger Danger is another topic we focus on during Safety month. Child must be taught to be careful when approached by a stranger.

The other themes for **October** include *Fall Harvest, Pumpkins, and Apples*. We will explore the beauty around us as the weather changes: the fall leaves and orange pumpkins. Some of our art activities will include a leaf collage, leaf rubbings, and apple prints.

Please remember as the weather turns cooler, to change out your cubby supply of extra clothing and jackets. Also, LABEL everything. If a substitute teacher is in the class or someone else has to pick up your child, she might not know which jacket is yours and we frequently shop at the same stores and buy the same cute sweater or jacket. Labeling will reduce the chance of loss.

Thank you Chargers 1

Block Play for All

Kay Stritzel, one of the most playful people we know, in her **Exchange** article, "[Block Play is for ALL Children](#)," which is included in the **Exchange** CD Book, [Promoting the Value of Play](#), observed...

"The block center can be the most exciting place in the early childhood classroom. A center that is attractive and well stocked with unit blocks is an invitation to learning that will last a child a lifetime. Why is it, then, that in many classrooms it is only a select group of boys and the occasional girl who are taking advantage of these blocks?"

She goes on to cite the value of inviting both boys and girls into block play...

"Girls often relish the opportunity to become skilled block builders. They are using numbers and math concepts in a very real way. They are eager to expand their storytelling abilities to include what they are building with blocks. Boys enjoy dramatic play with the blocks in a way that is different from their play in the housekeeping center. There can be a time for talking and sharing about what was built and comparisons to buildings that had been built previously in the block center.

"Most of all, it gives boys and girls a chance to work together on a real project, to share in the planning, building, and evaluation of the structure and possibly plan future structures together. Early childhood educators often lament that boys and girls don't play together often enough. Building and playing with unit blocks provides opportunities for them to play and learn together from this most valuable tool — the unit blocks"

CHARGERS II

Every week is different and the children change so much. The children in Chargers II are becoming more independent and learning how to build friendships with their classmates. We are still working on our colors, our numbers, our shapes, and introducing lower case letters. As children change and grow, they develop and mature at different times. Some students need more time than others to get potty trained. Our teachers are working with every child on this. The next three months we will have exciting and educational themes to learn about.

In August we will spend the first two weeks learning about our *five senses*. The children will practice using our 5 senses every day. Chargers II will have an activity for every sense we have. They will be able to touch different objects and guess what the object is. We will smell several scents like oranges or vanilla and then guess what it is. As they hear a noise, Chargers II students will identify it for the teachers. We will learn special songs about our senses.

The next two weeks, Chargers II will talk about our school rules and how school involves them. We will continue to practice our walking feet in the hall. For fun we want to trace our “walking feet” on paper. Every child will bring a picture of himself/herself and talk about how important they are as students at our school. Then every child will draw a picture on paper, and we will make a class quilt. The children in our class love to be read to and at circle time every day we will read a special book like How Do You Take a Mouse to School?

In September, we will get to know our friends and learn how special we are. Every child needs to feel important about himself/herself. Each child will be given a mirror and then will draw a self-portrait. At circle time everyday, each child will talk about himself or herself and what his/her favorite color, animal, or place is. We will make a class tree and every child will make something special to put on our tree. Chargers II will read books pertaining to our theme. Our class will sing *I Am Special*. Just ask one of the teachers if you'd like to learn the songs. Our last theme for the month will be

manners. The teachers will demonstrate for the students how and when to use our manners. We will do lots of paintings, coloring, and cutting during this time. We will read Manners! and watch the video *Pooh Learns His Manners*.

In October, we will talk about *fire prevention and stranger danger*. Our children will make fire hats. We will paint fire trucks and create fire on paper. We will read Fire Trucks. And maybe our local fire fighters and police officers can stop by for a visit. Next, we will talk about *fantasy*. The children's imaginations can run wild as we create our own stories. It's a good time to talk about characters on TV and are they “real” or “fantasy”. It is also a great opportunity to read some of the classic fairy tales. Chargers II will paint pictures of our favorite characters.

The last part of the month, we will discuss how there is a *fall harvest*. During a harvest we have pumpkins, apples, and corn. Chargers II will talk about how thankful we are for our families. The children will draw pictures of their families. We will paint with apples, corn, and pumpkins. During outside time, we will gather leaves and then glue them to the paper. At circle time, the teacher will read Giving Thanks.

As we talk about these themes over the next three months, we are also introducing our shapes and lower case letters. At circle time everyday, we go over our shape and letter of the week. One day of the week the children make a shape collage. They also put a food product pertaining to our letter for the week. For example if it's “b”, gluing on beans.

I enjoy being able to work with the little ones. If there is ever any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to call.

Ms. Cheryl
Ms. Jordan

You can learn many things from children. How much patience you have, for instance.

**Children are unpredictable. You never know what inconsistency they're going to catch you in next.
(Franklin P. Jones)**

Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression. (Dr. Hiam Ginnott).

PINTOS

Summer is almost over and with that the new school year arrives. We will kick off this month with the theme "Five Senses" and have a fruit-eating contest to use our sense of taste to see which fruits are really yummy. We will have secret jars to see who has the best sense of smell. We will have a "can you find it" bottle in our class for the children to find secret items in it. We will take a walk around the school and use our sense of hearing by quietly listening to our surroundings. Last, we will give the title of the "I Spy Champion" to the quickest child that can find things in the classroom and in the book by using our sense of sight. Later we will read books on school such as My First Day of School, I Love School and If You Take a Mouse to School and much more. We will discuss everyone's favorite thing about Rocking Horse Academy. We will finish of this month by reviewing the school rules in our classroom. As part of our curriculum, we will start our letter of the week when school starts. Every Friday from now on we will have show and tell with something that begins with that letter. Also in these upcoming months we will focus on the children learning the letters and their names, how to spell their name and how to write it.

In September we are going to focus on the theme "Getting to know you" by sending out a small questionnaire to all the parents so we can further assist/care for your child on a more one- on-one basis and to know the children better. Next, we will move on to "Manners"; we will encourage the children to use their manners especially in Spanish using the words gracias and por favor. Special friends will help along the way in learning that using our manners is very beneficiary to all like Barney in the book Sharing Is Caring, Clifford in Clifford's Big Deeds and Winnie the

Pooh in Be Patient, Pooh just to mention some. We will finish off this month by pointing out that everyone is special by creating a full body tracing of each child and have them decorate it his/her own way.

In the month of October comes our very first holiday as a new class which is Halloween and with that the themes "Fantasy" and "Stranger Danger" are a must. The children will watch the movie Stranger Safety to further enhance their vision of knowing what a stranger really is. Going over their addresses at this time will be perfect incorporate math by learning to identify numbers. Learning about what is fantasy and what's not will help the children be the authors of their own fantasy book and letting their imaginations go wild. (I can't wait to hear some of their stories!) Fire Prevention is another theme for this month and that means practicing stop, drop and roll as well as the numbers 911 in case of an emergency. The children will experiment with the colors red and yellow to make a flame hot orange. Last but not least, we will have our fall harvest by taking a field trip to the pumpkin patch and buying our own pumpkins (\$1.50-\$2.00). Carving a pumpkin will be fun but not as much fun as eating apples and making apple prints.

Gentle reminders: please don't forget to have extra clothes for your child in our classroom. Please check behavior charts daily and also your child's cubby. Don't forget to turn in homework that will be assigned to your child. Take water bottles home daily to better clean them and refill with fresh, cold water. No drinks or food after 7:15 and cut off time for dropping off your child is 10 a.m. and last but not least label, label, label everything that belongs to your child that is brought to school. We hope this upcoming year is even better than last year!

- We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give. Winston Churchill
- A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out. Walter Winchell
- A friend is one who knows us, but loves us anyway. Jerome Cummings

MUSTANGS

Welcome to the Mustang Class!

It's certainly true that time flies when you are having fun in the sun! It's hard to believe that the summer is drawing to a close and that the first day of school will soon be upon us! As your child's teacher, I would like to welcome all our new students and their families to the Mustang class.

August/September is an especially busy month for the Mustang class. We will work hard on preparing and setting up our classroom for a great year! I look forward to the start of a new school year, filled with new, fun and exciting challenges waiting for your child. I also look forward to the opportunity to work with each family as partners in education.

"Back to School" is our first theme. As each child is welcomed "back to school", he/she will be introduced to our "new" Mustang classroom. They will make new friends, learn more social skills, and practice classroom rules. During this month we focus on learning our daily schedule, routines, and procedures. As we learn about our classroom, we will also learn about school rules and why it's important to follow rules. With our guidance, the children actually create the class rules. When they participate in the creation of rules, they are more likely to follow them and help fellow classmates follow them as well.

"Getting to Know You" We will introduce ourselves to our friends using our names. We will practice using our friend's names and seeing the names in written form, too. In learning about each other and our families, we will teach the children how to interact with one another. They will share each family's cultures and traditions throughout the year. Using language skills, we will learn about the children's likes and differences. Activities are planned that will teach your child to begin to think of others as well as themselves. The focus on awareness of others allows the children to learn acceptance of the diversity that makes up our world. It's important that children be taught respect, considerate behaviors, thoughtfulness, tolerance. By reading books and listening to stories, we will come together to learn all about how special each and every child is. New songs that relate to family & friends will be included.

"Manners" Use of good manners will be emphasized more. The children will learn what manners are, how and when we use manners. We will say "please" and "thank you"; we will practice saying "no, thank you" and "excuse me". Teaching

manners gives the children the language to use and when it is appropriate to use them. As they put their manners to use in daily situations, they will develop understanding, and kindness towards others.

"I am Special" "The month will conclude with many activities that reinforce the idea that each child is special in their own way, using art, songs, and poems. This month's art activities are planned to help build self-esteem and self awareness.

R H A invites parents to attend RHA **Back to School Night**. September 10th, 2009 5:30-6:30p.m. Join us for a look into a day in the life of your child at RHA.

October

Fire Prevention Week/Stranger Danger This month we will kick off Fire Prevention/Stranger Danger month. We practice our fire drills every month, but during October we want to focus more on the important people in the community (police officer, firefighter, etc.) October's first two weeks will be focused on "Fire Prevention and Stranger Danger". These two weeks will include lessons on how to prevent fires and what to do if there is a fire. We will practice evacuating the classroom and school, and **Stop Drop & Roll**. This would be a good time to practice a fire drill at your house. We will learn what a stranger is and why it is important to *never* go anywhere with a stranger. We will invite the Kyle Firefighters and Police officers to visit our school to also talk with the children. They may even allow us to climb onto their big red trucks.

October ends with the children learning about Fantasy. As we role play, sing songs, and learn about fantasy, we will read and act out many wonderful fairytales. The Mustang's will experience the difference between fantasy and reality through age-appropriate, cooperative play. Projects will be provided to help reach an understanding of the difference between fantasies, pretend, and reality. Many projects will help the children to prepare and look forward to a safe Halloween.

Our days will be filled with laughter, learning and lots of fun. Be sure to visit the Mustang class.

Ms. Barbara

Mustang teacher

TROTTERS

It's hard to believe summer has come and gone. A new school year is quickly approaching and the Trotters can't wait. As we get settled into the August heat, we will discover our five senses in a variety of ways. We will gain a sense of touch through sensory texture painting, a sense of taste through tongue tasting, a sense of smell through scented play dough, a sense of sight through reflections, and a sense of sound with a listening game. As we settle into our school routine, we will learn about our school, its rules, and the proper behavior expected of us. The first "official" day of school is August 24. The Trotters will start the alphabet from the beginning as of that week.

The first few weeks in September will be spent getting to know you, your Trotter, as well as the Trotter teachers. A great way for the Trotter parents to get involved in this is to attend our Back to School Night on September 10th at 5:30pm. There will be a short orientation in the gym for new families and those wishing to have a refresher course on RHA. Please take advantage of this evening as you will get to tour your child's classroom and meet his/her teachers. The rest of the month will be spent learning and perfecting our manners and learning how special we are. *Yes ma'am, no ma'am, yes sir, no sir, please* and *thank you* are just a few of the courtesies we will implement into our everyday routines and conversations. Please practice these good manners with your child as it will make this good habit stay.

Important dates in September:

- September 7: Labor Day RHA CLOSED
- September 10: Back to School Night
- September 21: Food Fundraiser Begins
- September 22: Class portraits

October will be packed full of fun and learning. We start out with Fire Prevention and Stranger Danger. A visit

from the fire department will be first on our agenda. They will teach us how to crawl out of a room full of smoke, stop, drop, and roll, and what a fire fighter will look like when he/she is rescuing you from a fire. To learn even more about the fire department we will be allowed to crawl through a fire truck and look at all the gizmos and gadgets that make it work. As the middle of the month nears, we will wander into a land of fantasy. While in our fantasy world, we will study how your point of view can change when seen through different "eyes". The Three Little Pigs will be one of the stories we read from different points of view. At the end of October we will have a Fall Harvest. We will take a trip to the Pumpkin Patch where we will each pick out a pumpkin after we have a picnic in the park. Friday, October 30, will be our Halloween Costume Parade, please feel free to send your child to school in costume as we will trick or treat throughout the school. A great idea is to send them to school in last year's costume so we don't get any rips or stains before they get to wear it for Halloween.

Don't Forget:

- October 6: Fundraiser Food Order Due
- October 12: Teacher Training RHA CLOSED
- October 30: Halloween Costume Parade

As always, if you have questions please call and we can schedule a conference. Please remember to bring those water bottles every day with fresh water. It's still very hot outside and we want our students to be well hydrated. And as fall approaches, change out the clothes in your child's cubby. Soon (hard to believe) we will need jackets or sweaters for recess. And LABEL everything. If we have a substitute teacher, or different parents pick up than ones who drop off, it makes it easier to gather jackets or lunch boxes.

"It is never too late to be what we might have been."

George Eliot

BRONCOS

Welcome New Broncos to a wonderful new school year. I am very excited about learning more about each Bronco as well as beginning our school year curriculum. This fall we will work on making sure that all Broncos know all about the alphabet, recognizing, writing and sounding out each letter of the alphabet in both upper case and lower case. This will be the foundation for learning to combine sounds and begin reading in the spring. Some other goals I have for the class this fall are:

- ✓ Learn to recognize and write the numbers 1-20
- ✓ Count to 50
- ✓ Continue to build our fine motor skills with activities that involve cutting, coloring and manipulating small items such as beads.
- ✓ Categorize items based on multiple criteria
- ✓ Recognize and build patterns

The first two weeks of August we will be learning all about our 5 senses. This is always a fun theme I know we will all enjoy. We will taste "new" foods, smell vinegar and oranges, touch velvet and sand paper, play *I spy*, and listen to country and classical music. The third week in August we will begin welcoming new Broncos who have been gone for the summer. We will spend a week learning and practicing the rules and procedures at school. For some Broncos the transition will be easy, for others it will take a little more practice. We encourage you to talk about the rules at home with your Bronco. The last week of August we will continue practicing and enforcing our rules and procedures as well as talking about what school means to each of us and make a family tree. We will need parents' help to collect pictures (more information to come.)

By September we will be in full swing, learning more every day. I will also start to send home homework. This is completely optional and meant only to reinforce what we are learning at school and allow you, as parents, to see what your child is learning. It also serves the purpose of introducing the students to the idea of homework since they will be starting Kindergarten next year. I will put these packets in the student's folders on Monday and ask that if you want me to see it that you return it on Friday.

As far as themes go we will start off the month of September by continuing to get to know each other. The children will be

asked to bring in things from home that tell something about themselves or their family such as pictures, favorite book or favorite music. Please, keep these in the cubbies until the appropriate time. Also, you may want to label books, CD's, etc... so that they do not get mixed up with other things. This week we will also make a special frame to keep our favorite family picture in. The second week in September is "I am Special" Week. We will talk about what makes each of us different and special. The end of the month of September we will work on Manners. We ask that you talk about and try to reinforce good manners at home. It is sometimes hard for young children to distinguish between a particular action that may be acceptable at home but not at school.

Reminder: Rocking Horse Back to School Night is September 10th from 5:30-6:30.

As fall comes around we will have several important themes in October. First, we will begin the month by talking about Fire Safety and Prevention. At this time we will have a firefighter come to speak with the class. This is always a big hit. This would be a great time for parents to discuss fire safety at home as well as review a fire escape plan at home. After Fire Safety we will move into Stranger Danger. During this week we will talk about, as well as role-play how to deal with Strangers. We will also watch the *Safe Side*. Your children may have questions about this as we discuss it in class. Parents could take this opportunity to talk with their children about safe adults that they can trust. The third week in October will be Fantasy week, followed by Fall Harvest, where we will learn about Pumpkins and Apples and how they are grown and harvested. To end the month we will have a costume party for Halloween.

I am very excited about getting started with the new school year and getting to know all the Broncos as well as parents. I believe that when teachers and parents have open communication and the same goals for their children that those children thrive. I am available between 1:00 and 2:30 if you have questions, comments or concerns you would like to discuss. You may call Rocking Horse Academy at 405-3700 or email me at casey.hall@grandecom.net

BACK TO SCHOOL

AUGUST 24th

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

The following health and safety tips are from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Feel free to excerpt these tips or use them in their entirety in any print or broadcast story, with acknowledgment of source.

MAKING THE FIRST DAY EASIER

- Remind your child that she is not the only student who is a bit uneasy about the first day of school. Teachers know that students are anxious and will make an extra effort to make sure everyone feels as comfortable as possible.
- Point out the positive aspects of starting school: It will be fun. She'll see old friends and meet new ones. Refresh her positive memories about previous years, when she may have returned home after the first day with high spirits because she had a good time.
- Find another child in the neighborhood with whom your youngster can walk to school or ride with on the bus.
- If you feel it is appropriate, drive your child (or walk with her) to school and pick her up on the first day.

BACKPACK SAFETY

- Choose a backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and a padded back.
- Pack light. Organize the backpack to use all of its compartments. Pack heavier items closest to the center of the back. The backpack should never weigh more than 10 to 20 percent of the your child's body weight.
- Always use both shoulder straps. Slinging a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles.
- Consider a rolling backpack. This type of backpack may be a good choice for students who must tote a heavy load. Remember that rolling backpacks still must be carried up stairs, and they may be difficult to roll in snow.

TRAVELING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Review the basic rules with your youngster:

School Bus

- If your child's school bus has lap/shoulder seat belts, make sure your child uses one at all times when in the bus. If your child's school bus does not have lap/shoulder belts, encourage the school to buy or lease buses with lap/shoulder belts.
- Wait for the bus to stop before approaching it from the curb.
- Do not move around on the bus.
- Check to see that no other traffic is coming before

crossing.

- Make sure to always remain in clear view of the bus driver.
- Children should always board and exit the bus at locations that provide safe access to the bus or to the school building.

Car

- All passengers should wear a seat belt and/or an age- and size-appropriate car safety seat or booster seat.
- Your child should ride in a car safety seat with a harness as long as possible and then ride in a belt-positioning booster seat. Your child is ready for a booster seat when she has reached the top weight or height allowed for her seat, her shoulders are above the top harness slots, or her ears have reached the top of the seat.
- Your child should ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's seat belt fits properly (usually when the child reaches about 4' 9" in height and is between 8 to 12 years of age). This means that the child is tall enough to sit against the vehicle seat back with her legs bent at the knees and feet hanging down and the shoulder belt lies across the middle of the chest and shoulder, not the neck or throat; the lap belt is low and snug across the thighs, and not the stomach.
- All children under 13 years of age should ride in the rear seat of vehicles. If you must drive more children than can fit in the rear seat (when car-pooling, for example), move the front-seat passenger's seat as far back as possible and have the child ride in a booster seat if the seat belts do not fit properly without it.
- Remember that many crashes occur while novice teen drivers are going to and from school. You should require seat belt use, limit the number of teen passengers, do not allow eating, drinking, cell phone conversations or texting to prevent driver distraction; and limit nighttime driving and driving in inclement weather. Familiarize yourself with your state's graduated driver license law and consider the use of a parent-teen driver agreement to facilitate the early driving learning process.

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Bike

- Always wear a bicycle helmet, no matter how short or long the ride.
- Ride on the right, in the same direction as auto traffic.
- Use appropriate hand signals.
- Respect traffic lights and stop signs.
- Wear bright color clothing to increase visibility.
- Know the "rules of the road."

Walking to School

- Make sure your child's walk to a school is a safe route with well-trained adult crossing guards at every intersection.
- Be realistic about your child's pedestrian skills. Because small children are impulsive and less cautious around traffic, carefully consider whether or not your child is ready to walk to school without adult supervision.
- If your child is young or is walking to new school, walk with them the first week to make sure they know the route and can do it safely.
- Bright colored clothing will make your child more visible to drivers.
- In neighborhoods with higher levels of traffic, consider starting a "walking school bus," in which an adult accompanies a group of neighborhood children walking to school.

EATING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

- Most schools regularly send schedules of cafeteria menus home. With this advance information, you can plan on packing lunch on the days when the main course is one your child prefers not to eat.
- Try to get your child's school to stock healthy choices such as fresh fruit, low-fat dairy products, water and 100 percent fruit juice in the vending machines.
- Each 12-ounce soft drink contains approximately 10 teaspoons of sugar and 150 calories. Drinking just one can of soda a day increases a child's risk of obesity by 60%. Restrict your child's soft drink consumption.

BULLYING

Bullying is when one child picks on another child repeatedly. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social. It can happen at school, on the playground, on the school bus, in the neighborhood, or over the Internet.

When Your Child Is Bullied

- Help your child learn how to respond by teaching your child how to:
 1. Look the bully in the eye.
 2. Stand tall and stay calm in a difficult situation.
 3. Walk away.
- Teach your child how to say in a firm voice.
 1. "I don't like what you are doing."
 2. "Please do NOT talk to me like that."
 3. "Why would you say that?"
- Teach your child when and how to ask for help.
- Encourage your child to make friends with other chil-

dren.

- Support activities that interest your child.
- Alert school officials to the problems and work with them on solutions.
- Make sure an adult who knows about the bullying can watch out for your child's safety and well-being when you cannot be there.

When Your Child Is the Bully

- Be sure your child knows that bullying is never OK.
- Set firm and consistent limits on your child's aggressive behavior.
- Be a positive role model. Show children they can get what they want without teasing, threatening or hurting someone.
- Use effective, non-physical discipline, such as loss of privileges.
- Develop practical solutions with the school principal, teachers, counselors, and parents of the children your child has bullied.

When Your Child Is a Bystander

- Tell your child not to cheer on or even quietly watch bullying.
- Encourage your child to tell a trusted adult about the bullying.
- Help your child support other children who may be bullied. Encourage your child to include these children in activities.
- Encourage your child to join with others in telling bullies to stop.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CHILD CARE

- During middle childhood, youngsters need supervision. A responsible adult should be available to get them ready and off to school in the morning and watch over them after school until you return home from work.
- Children approaching adolescence (11- and 12-year-olds) should not come home to an empty house in the afternoon unless they show unusual maturity for their age.
- If alternate adult supervision is not available, parents should make special efforts to supervise their children from a distance. Children should have a set time when they are expected to arrive at home and should check in with a neighbor or with a parent by telephone.
- If you choose a commercial after-school program, inquire about the training of the staff. There should be a high staff-to-child ratio, and the rooms and the playground should be safe.

DEVELOPING GOOD HOMEWORK AND STUDY HABITS

- Create an environment that is conducive to doing homework. Youngsters need a permanent work space in their bedroom or another part of the home that offers privacy.

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- Set aside ample time for homework.
- Establish a household rule that the TV set stays off during homework time.
- Supervise computer and internet use.
- Be available to answer questions and offer assistance, but never do a child's homework for her.
- Take steps to help alleviate eye fatigue, neck fatigue and brain fatigue while studying. It may be helpful to close the books for a few minutes, stretch, and take a break periodically when it will not be too disruptive.
- If your child is struggling with a particular subject, and you aren't able to help her yourself, a tutor can be a good solution. Talk it over with your child's teacher first.



August
 17 Official start day for staff
 17-19 Staff Development
 20-21 Staff Preparation
 19 Convocation, 9 a.m.
 20 Elementary Back to School Night
 20 Middle School schedule pickup, 12-7 p.m.
 24 First Day of School

September
 7 Staff/Student Holiday

October
 12 Student Holiday, Teacher Conferences for Elementary/Staff Development for Secondary

November
 23-24 "Exchange Days" for Staff
 25-27 Thanksgiving

December
 21-31 Christmas Break

January
 1 Christmas Break
 4 Student Holiday/Staff Development
 5 Student Holiday/Staff Preparation
 18 Staff/Student Holiday

February
 15 Student Holiday/Staff Development

March
 15-19 Spring Break

April
 2 Staff/Student Holiday
 19 Staff/Student Holiday

May
 31 Staff/Student Holiday

June
 3 Last Day of School
 4 Staff Preparation
 Should one instructional day be lost to bad weather, April 19 would become the make-up day. If a second day is lost, we would make it up on June 4.

Calendar Days: 187
Instructional Days: 175
Staff Development Days: 8
Preparation Days: 4

2009-10

M	TU	W	TH	F
July 2009				
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

M	TU	W	TH	F
August 2009				
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

M	TU	W	TH	F
September 2009				
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25

M	TU	W	TH	F
October 2009				
28	29	30	1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

M	TU	W	TH	F
November 2009				
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

M	TU	W	TH	F
December 2009				
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

M	TU	W	TH	F
January 2010				
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

M	TU	W	TH	F
February 2010				
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26

M	TU	W	TH	F
March 2010				
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

M	TU	W	TH	F
April 2010				
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

M	TU	W	TH	F
May 2010				
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

M	TU	W	TH	F
June 2010				
	1	2		4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

Legend

< Start of Six Weeks Period □ Staff/Student Holiday
 > End of Six Weeks Period ○ Student Holiday and Staff Development/Prep.
 - TAKS testing

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