Sweet Gum Upper Elementary Community
Distance Learning Plan & Digital Resources
Week of April 20, 2020

Dear Sweet Gum Community,

As we enter week four of distance learning, you and your child will notice new offerings from various teachers for group or individual meetings on Zoom and Google Hangouts. Children should check their email accounts daily to review any meeting invitations or communication from teachers. Think of the new meeting invitations as options to consider. Participation is encouraged, but not at the expense of the rhythms and needs of family life.

I wanted to share a thought about the characteristics of the Upper Elementary child (or as Montessori called it, the second half of the second plane of development). In Upper Elementary, we build upon the foundational knowledge laid in Lower Elementary by seeking more and more connections between subjects areas (interdisciplinary learning!). Children strengthen their knowledge by doing "big work." It is important to have large blocks of uninterrupted time to truly delve deeply into topics of interest, to experiment and tinker, to explore and discover. There is no expectation that children cover every subject area every day. What we do recommend are daily habits of reading (1 hour), writing (from the DLP or otherwise), and targeted math skill practice (30-60 min), along with uninterrupted time to explore a topic of interest (this would be the "big work" concept).

Some of the most important skills we want to develop at this age are taking initiative and following through on a plan, time management, and resourcefulness. This pandemic has offered us all an opportunity to grow these skills as we navigate work and family life from home. Keep in mind, this process is not always graceful or linear, and we've all had to make major adjustments to our routines! Please contact us if you are looking for scaffolding strategies or supplemental ideas.

The following subject areas include new activities and projects this week:

- **Reading** - Book Club Meetings are scheduled (see details below) and Considering Setting in Reading Response Journals
- **Writing** - The Revising and Editing Processes
- **Math and Geometry** - Off-Screen Options (beyond Khan Academy)
- **History** - Reporting on Current Events
- **Science** - EPA Food Waste Challenge
- **Geography** - Virtual Tours and Make Your Own Brochures!

Book Club Schedule:

- **Mondays from 9:00-9:30 AM** - *Circus Mirandus*
- **Thursdays from 1:30-2:00 PM** - *Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes*
- **Fridays from 1:00-1:30 PM** - *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*

If your child has not tried every activity from Weeks 1-3, you can find downloadable links to these plans under the “Downloadable Weekly Plans and Resources” panel on the webpage. Previous weekly plans from Specialists are also available on the Specials webpage.

In service,

Ms. Isaza and Mr. Kendall

Daily Reading and Response Journal:

- Read a fiction book for a minimum of 1 hour per day. This book could be your new book club book, or an independent book you are already reading.
- Keep a response journal each time you read:
    - This week, focus on **setting** by exploring how place affects a character’s sense of identity. Remember, setting is the place where the events of a story happen. Most stories have more than one setting (e.g. In *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum, there are a number of major settings: a family farm in Kansas, the Land of Oz, and the Emerald City).
    - Imagine how your home life (your own current setting) is influencing you these days. Is your bedroom sunny and cozy, a space where you find yourself doing quieter, peaceful activities? Is your kitchen chaotic and messy, inviting experimentation and noisy conversation? Think about how your environment influences you in various ways. How might the author of your book be using setting to show us something about a character?

Writing:

This week, choose one of your writing drafts from the past month and go through the revision and editing process, using the checklists below to evaluate your work in progress. Bring your reflections and writing goals to your weekly conference with Ms. Isaza and Mr. Kendall, or schedule a writing conference with Ms. Navarro!

- Expository Writing Revision and Editing Checklist (for research and reports)
- Narrative Writing Revision and Editing Checklist (for storytelling)
- Descriptive Writing Revision and Editing Checklist (for poetry and creative writing)
- Persuasive Writing Revision and Editing Checklist (for argument and opinion writing)

For fresh writing prompts this week, visit Ms. Navarro’s section of the Specials page. She posts a new prompt for each day of the week!

Writing Conferences:
Please reach out to Ms. Navarro by email at e.navarro@aidanschool.org if you would like to schedule a writing conference with her. She would love to hear what you are writing about these days and support your creative work!

Weekly Spelling List and Activity:
Parents, the lists attached are suggestions for the children. An old fashioned dictionary or independent reading books work fine to scout for new and interesting words instead of using the PDF lists.

Children, choose ten words to learn this week. Ideally these are words you use often but notice that you don't feel comfortable spelling in your own writing, or they can be words that trip you up while reading. As a backup, you can choose words from one of the high frequency lists, or new vocabulary you encounter through your own research.

Remember, new words will only stick if you use them, so practice multiple times and make sure they are going to be applicable in your work.

Once you have chosen words, practice spelling them correctly. Options for this include:

- **Word Wall Card**
- **Tiles**: spell with bananagrams tiles
- **Shaving Cream**: write in shaving cream using a silpat or tray
- **Skin/Air Writing**: trace the letters on your skin with a finger, tap each letter down your arm and then say the whole word, or write them in the sky using your whole arm
- **Stamp**: use an alphabet box to stamp the words with ink or into dough
- **Sand:** trace the words with your finger in a sand tray
- **Word Hunt**: search a book or the environment around you for each word and then record
- **Cirque du Soleil**: form each letter on the rug with your body
- **Chant**: chant each letters in a rhythmic pattern
- **Rainbow**: choose 3-5 colors and write the word in each
- **Story**: write a story/poem that includes all of the words
- **Teach**: teach someone else how to spell the word

Each time, make sure you:

1. Read the word aloud (while looking at it in written form).
2. Spell the word aloud, one letter at a time.
3. Attempt to spell without looking at the word (using one of the above methods).
4. Check that you spelled the word correctly.
5. Create a sentence that uses the word (aloud).

High Frequency Word Lists (see PDF)
Grade 4 List (see PDF)
Grade 5 List (see PDF)

Math and Geometry:
There are so many possibilities for graph making these days! Some of these graphs you may have already learned at school, but you might consider researching or having your parents

show you one you haven't learned yet (or ask about this in our weekly meeting). Think carefully about the kind of information that could be graphed at home (see the science activity this week as one option). Consider taking surveys, measurements, nature observations, and noting things that are changing over time. Determine a graph that will best represent your data visually:

- Bar Graph
- Line Graph
- Pictograph
- Pie Graph
- Scatterplot

Or, you might familiarize yourself with a numeral system and then make up your own! People of the past invented numerals to solve everyday problems. When was zero introduced? How does zero help us solve problems in our decimal (base ten) system today?:

- Roman Numerals
- Greek Numerals
- Egyptian Numerals
- Babylonian Numerals
- Mayan Numerals
- Binary System

A great way to practice mental math is by playing the game "Monopoly" and taking the role of the banker. Or keeping score in a family game of "Scrabble." If a game takes many hours, consider playing in a spot where it could be left out and resumed later.

Don't forget to visit Mr. Hurwitz's curriculum supplements on the Specials page! He has shared a number of printable packets that are grade specific.

Khan Academy:

Parents, you are encouraged to create an account on Khan Academy for your child. The accounts are FREE. You may click the grade level links below to subscribe your child to a course under my teacher account page, where they can access learning content (video tutorials and activities) and I can view their progress through course content. Content is not lock-step, and it is self-paced. If you do not subscribe your child to the "courses" via the links below, I will not be able to view their progress or work, but the children will still be able to access the various tutorials and content.

Each day, your child should choose an appropriate topic to review/learn and practice. If this is their first experience on the Khan Academy platform, they may need some guidance finding an appropriate topic of study. In general, grade level topics should be familiar territory (e.g. a 4th Year should look through the 4th Grade content and select a topic).

If for any reason your child does not have access to a computer or you prefer to support their work differently, there are plenty of alternative ways to build math appreciation, number flexibility

and to practice building skills. Please see the links below with further ideas (I recommend "Numbers Talks" at this link - once a parent knows how to have a number talk, these can make for fun, spontaneous conversations).

If you have simple tools at home (e.g. geometry compass, ruler, measuring cups, graph paper, protractor, thermometers, etc.) your child is encouraged to put those tools to good use! If you have workbooks at home (e.g. Kumon, Spectrum, Common Core Math) please feel free to use those instead of Khan Academy for skill practice.

Because each child's math and geometry work is individualized at school, I understand that supporting this work can be a challenge outside of school. Please feel free to drop me a note for some guidance or assistance identifying the best fit for your child.

Khan Academy information letter to parents: link

Grade 4 Math Essentials Course link
Grade 5 Math Essentials Course link
Grade 6 Math Essentials Course link

If you are nostalgic (as I am) for our Montessori Math Materials, have a try at extracting the square root or finding common multiples on the pegboard VIRTUALLY, a new resource coded by a Montessori teacher's husband! This resource might be most fun for parents, to get a glimpse at how our materials work. A little tutorial can be provided if you request :)

History: Thinking About Current Events, and a Reading Comprehension Exercise
Choose a current issue in the news and read an article about it. You might use Newsela online to find interesting articles. After reading about your issue, record your responses to the questions below. On Friday, consider "reporting" on your current event at our Morning Community Meeting.

- **Who** is your article about?
- **Who** does this issue affect?
- **What** is the topic of your article?
- **What** is the author's point about your topic?
- List 3 important facts from your article.
- **When** did the event take place?
- **Where** did this issue or event take place?
- **Why** does this issue matter to you, your community, or the world?

Read the attached article about citizenship and answer the reading comprehension questions on the last page. Either print the article and circle your answers, or write your answers in your journal and be ready to share your work on Friday.

Science: Food Waste Challenge & Data Collection
Remember the S.L.O.P. bucket at Echo Hill? S.L.O.P. stands for “Stuff Left on Plate.” This week, our science project might remind you of camping at Echo Hill!

Did you know that in 2013 Americans threw 35 million tons of food into landfills and incinerators? Research shows that nearly everyone wastes more than they think they do. The *Food: Too Good to Waste Challenge* designed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will help you figure out how much food is really going to waste in your home and what you can do to waste less. By making small shifts in how you shop for, prepare, and store food, you can save time and money, and keep the valuable resources used to produce and distribute food from going to waste!

This week, measure how much food you or your entire household wastes in one week.

The initial goal this week is to measure your “baseline” data, which should reflect as much as possible what you usually do, without taking any new action to reduce food waste.

You might be wondering, what is preventable food waste?

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s *Food: Too Good to Waste Toolkit*, this is “food you bought to eat but has since spoiled and food that was prepared but not eaten and was then thrown away.” This does not include food scraps you wouldn’t normally eat or liquids.

Examples of Unprepared Preventable Food Waste: a moldy onion, squishy grapes, freezer burned corn

Examples of Prepared Preventable Food Waste: stale bread, or leftovers on your plate (a.k.a. S.L.O.P.!).

Egg shells, fruit pits, fruit peels, and liquids are generally considered regular food waste.

Now, start measuring your food waste for one week!

Prepare to measure and keep track of information about each preventable food waste item using the Data Collection sheet provided. This will include the day number and time, description, volume in cups, weight in lbs (optional), whether it is Unprepared Food (U) or Prepared Food (P), and why it was thrown away.

Start collecting a week’s worth (7 days) of waste in a closed container so at the end of the 7 days we can measure the volume in cups, calculate your family’s baseline success metric per person per day, and take a “Before” picture!

Plan to submit your findings by Monday, April 27. You will need to report the total volume of preventable food waste in cups, your number of teammates (how many people in your household), and the number of days collected. You will also be asked to share information about what items were wasted and why and ideas you have for taking action in the future weeks!

Other: Select a science project from this link. Make sure you have the materials at home that are needed for your project of choice. Follow the instructions, collect data and observations, and write down your conclusions. Send photos of your process, or share your conclusions with me by Friday at j.isaza@aidanschool.org

Geography Activity:
Many National Parks are offering virtual tours and live webcams of some of the most stunning and curious places in the country. Even from home, it's a great time to explore the geographical features of the earth! Create a travel brochure for your favorite National Park, or a favorite city, state, country, or other place you have traveled or would like to visit one day.

First, consider that the purpose of a brochure is to showcase information about someone or something and to attract someone to visit a place or try an experience. Where have you seen brochures used before? What sections might your brochure include? What else do you notice about what a brochure looks like? How is it set up? How is it different from other types of writing?

Now it's time to draft your brochure. Choose six main sections or topics about your place. If I chose Yellowstone National Park, I might choose six geographical features and describe each one (geysers, volcanoes, glacial carved valleys, rivers, lakes, and forests).I might include drawings of each to complement my text. Consider styles of lettering and making headings for each section.

For inspiration, watch the Old Faithful Geyser at Yellowstone National Park here.

Find out about other National Park virtual tours and webcams here.

Care for the Home and Others:

- Plan a meal to cook or a recipe to bake. Be sure to clean the kitchen thoroughly upon completion, and return any tools and utensils to their proper home.
- Offer to care for any houseplants or family pets.
- If you have your own bookshelf, organize it by genre (e.g. fantasy, literary fiction, nonfiction, science fiction, poetry, etc.) or by author last name, or help a sibling organize their shelf.
- Wash and fold your own laundry.
- Offer to set the table for a family meal.

- Fix something broken (e.g. darning a sock).
- Ask an adult how you can help with a task (carrying groceries, taking out trash, etc.)
- Write a list of questions on paper slips and have the family draw questions from a bowl or hat to make for some interesting dinner conversation.
- Call someone lonely.
- Play with a sibling.
- Read aloud to a younger sibling.

Care for Self:

- Take a mindfulness break
- Do something creative (e.g. paint, draw, write a poem, build something, play music, make a booklet and decorate the cover)
- Prepare a healthy snack or smoothie
- Get some exercise (e.g. practice yoga)
- If you have the resources nearby, try some handwork (kumihimo, knitting, crochet, embroidery, origami, sewing)
- Learn something new from YouTube (see links below)
- Learn something new from someone else!
- Wash your hands often :)

Enrichment Websites and Videos:

Please check back here as we plan to add to the content as we scout for new resources!

Current Events:

*****Newsela (customizable, child-friendly current events articles. An account is free to access content. Parents can even customize reading level. Quizzes and writing prompts are also an option.)
IndyKids (a free paper for kids, by kids)

History/Geography:

NativLang (history of written and spoken languages)
Primitive Technology (be sure to turn on captions!)
Native Land (explore an interactive world map to learn more about Indigenous territories, languages, and treaties)
MetKids (need adult to help child subscribe and access interactive art history site)
Jas. Townsend and Son (18th century cooking and culture)
Fashioning a Nation Art History Gallery
1619 Project (includes link to the podcast from NYT which examines the legacy of slavery in the U.S. - the children have listened to episode 1 of the podcast together and we have discussed it as a class. Any new content should be previewed before sharing with your child, and discussions are encouraged throughout the episodes - recommended for trips in the car!).

Big History Project (a framework for history exploration - beginning with the origin of the universe - a great complement to our Montessori history studies and full of timelines and videos for inspiration)
CIA World Factbook (great resource for collecting data and statistics about countries, can use data to make maps, charts, graphs)
Teaching Tolerance Student Texts (searchable library of short texts offers a diverse mix of stories and perspectives)

Science:
*Scientific American's Bring Science Home Collection (science experiments and demos, many easy to replicate at home)
Kurzgesagt - In a Nutshell (well-sourced animations exploring a wide range of scientific ideas)
SmarterEveryDay (charismatic engineer "explores the world using science")
Domain of Science YouTube Channel (scientist and children's book author has a channel that some might also enjoy)
Deep Sea (scroll down and discover the animals living in different zones of the oceans, some you might never see with your own eyes!)
Super Charged Science (free online science classes at specific times, e.g astronomy)
Wall of Birds from Cornell Lab of Ornithology (a beautiful mural of all known families of birds and it is to scale. You can explore the mural by zooming in or you can click on the name of a specific bird and it will zoom in on the illustration along with information about the bird)
National Geographic Kids Science Lab (in case you need more ideas for easy experiments at home)

Math and Geometry:
***Number Talks (Parents should watch the video tutorial and can implement quite easily at home for some great logical reasoning and number flexibility work.)
Codecademy (learn to code for free)
TEDEd "The Infinite Life of Pi" Video - Enjoy a Belated Celebration of Pi Day (3.14)
Mathigon (a treasure trove of math and geometry activities and resources. Use class code **U3MW-LECH** to access content)

Writing:
The Learning Network NYT (adults should preview content first and can access additional writing prompts, current events, contests, and more curated content)
Mentor Texts NYT (explore a new writing technique from this collection by the NYT - parents should preview content first)

Cooking:
Bon Appetit (many different voices and opinions about cooking and food)

Art:
Instructables (a maker and crafter gold mine full of project ideas!)

Museums with Virtual Gallery Tours can be found through this link
Join Artist Mo Willems at 1PM daily for his "Lunch Doodles" tutorial videos

Mindfulness:
Mindful School Free Mindfulness Practice for Kids Online (1PM on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday)