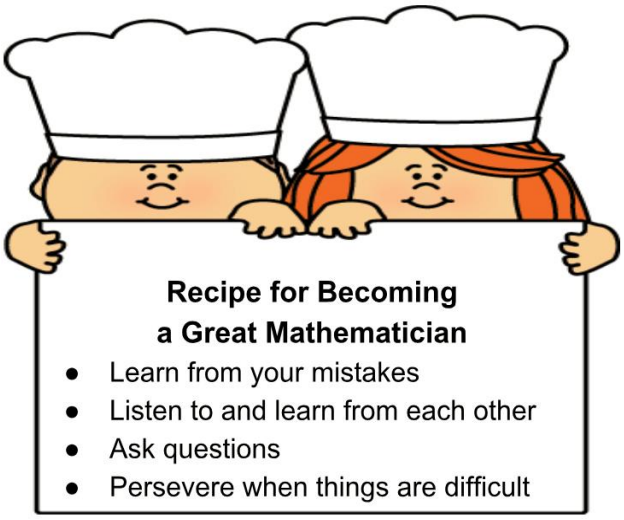
Kindergarten Family Letter
Becoming a Great Mathematician through Classroom Community

Dear Families,

During the first few weeks of Kindergarten, the focus in math will be to develop our classroom community and to foster a **growth mindset**. New evidence from brain research tells us that everyone can be a mathematician, learning mathematics at the highest levels. Evidence suggests that the difference between those who succeed in math and those who don't is not based on the brains they were born with, but rather their mindsets. Individuals with a **fixed mindset** believe that people are either smart or not smart. In contrast, *"in a **growth mindset**, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment."* (Dweck, 2015).



As your child's teacher, I believe in the power of a growth mindset. This newsletters provides resources for helping your child develop a growth mindset, and become a great kindergarten mathematician.

Your Partner in Learning,

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Great Mathematicians
Learn from Their Mistakes.

Research shows that when we make mistakes, synapses fire and our brains grow. Research even shows that mistakes don't have to be corrected in order for brains to grow.

How can parents help?

- When your child gets something wrong, remind them that their brain is growing and that's a good thing.
- Use examples from everyday life. Talk with your child about mistakes you've made and how your brain has grown through those mistakes.
- Watch the YouTube video: *The Power of 'Yet' with Zoe & Elmo from Sesame Street*.

Great Mathematicians
Listen to and Learn from Each Other.

Playing games and cooperative activities create opportunities to listen and learn from others.

How can parents help?

- Work together to build with blocks. While building, talk, take turns, and problem solve.
- Before doing a task together, take turns saying the steps. Each person says a step until finished. This teaches the importance of listening carefully to complete a job. *For example: When talking about making a peanut butter sandwich, the child might say "First go to the pantry to take out the bread." Then the parent might say "Put the bread on the counter." Turns continue.*
- Watch the YouTube video: *The Listening Game / Comic Kids Zen Den*.

Great Mathematicians Ask Questions.

In a traditional math class, students answer someone else's questions. In the real world, mathematicians answer their own questions. Crucial skills valued among mathematicians include *inquiry*, *ability to investigate*, and *asking questions to gather information*.

How can parents help?

- Your child's natural curiosity leads to great questions. Take a minute to investigate answers to these questions.

- Look at scenes or images from your daily life. Ask, "What is the first question that comes to your mind?"



- Play "I notice. I wonder." Look at scenes or images from daily life. Ask, "What do you notice? What do you wonder?" Seek answers to your child's wonderings.

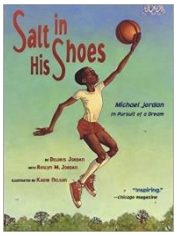


Great Mathematicians Persevere when things are difficult.

Being able to persevere when things get difficult is an important skill in math and in everyday life. Perseverance is strongly tied to growth mindset. When you feel you're capable of doing anything with hard work, you will persevere when you encounter harder problems.

How can parents help?

- Read stories of perseverance and discuss ways characters persevered to reach goals.
  - *Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream, by Deloris Jordan & Roslyn Jordan*
  - *The Most Magnificent Thing by Ashley Spires*
  - *Brave Irene, by William Steig*
  - *You Can Do It, Bert! by Ole Könnecke*
  - *How to Catch a Star*, by Oliver Jeffers
  - *Flight School*, by Lita Judge



- Watch the YouTube video: "Sesame Street: Bruno Mars: Don't Give Up"



Einstein, one of the world's most well-known 'geniuses', said that his biggest achievements came from the number of mistakes he made and the persistence he had shown. When he made mistakes, he persevered, trying even harder. What a great story to share with kids!