



Spruce Street School – P.S./I.S. 397

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Dear Families,

It is hard to believe how much has happened in the relatively short amount of time we have lived in the 2015-16 school year. As I type, the sun is rising on School Day 24. That means we've had 24 days of learning, of lunch time, of arrival, etc. Each day has brought opportunities to build **relationships** and launch the new year smoothly.

October is a time where newness and familiarity intersect. We are over the September jitters, but still learning a lot about each other. We have dozens of new students, staff and families who have joined the Spruce community this year, and it can surely take some time to get to know each other. Even if you have been here for a while (as I have!), each year brings new dynamics to learn and help shape. In general, October is the perfect time to consider the art of **relationships** within our school community.

As a reminder, our main priority this year is to maintain a sense of ONE SCHOOL. This includes preserving instructional coherence across all grades, so all Spruce Street students engage in rich, engaging curricula. This also includes preserving a positive, cohesive school culture where we both support students with social emotional development and hold them to high expectations.

Examples across Spruce

Relationships are deepening across all classrooms at Spruce. We have always valued classroom communities as the foundation of a strong school culture. With our emphasis on Responsive Classroom, this work has extended even further. Each day, our students cultivate **relationships** through Morning Meetings and Closing Circles. Teachers help facilitate high expectations for students and a common sense of empathy with interpersonal **relationships**. We know that **relationships** between and among students are vital to the success of our school. We must support children in working and learning together.

Teachers and staff also work to build **relationships** with students. Now that October is well underway, these connections often include a solid understanding of each child's academic and social-emotional needs. We spend an ample amount of time assessing children and adapting our curriculum to their strengths and needs. That can't happen without a connection forming between teacher and student. We aim for all children to feel known by the adults at Spruce Street. As always, please reach out to your child's teacher (or Sarah or Julie) if there are ways we can better know and build a **relationship** with your child.

Adult Relationships

Like everything else we do with children, positive interpersonal **relationships** require modeling and support from the grownups. Since we know **relationships** can be fragile and require deliberate action to nurture them, we need to step up and show children how this can be done.

Students often see (and hear about) collaboration across our school. They witness teachers planning together, the adults in the lunch room working together, and members of the PTA volunteering at community events. These are all powerful opportunities to teach through example. Here are some additional ideas to deepen that work:

~ *How have we welcomed new members to our adult community?*

- I saw many new faces at Taste of the Seaport this weekend – what a fabulous way to feel a part of our community! Let’s keep that trend going with upcoming PTA meetings, Community Coffees, and Learn Alongside your Child dates.

~ *How can teacher-parent meetings cultivate a strong partnership?*

- We know that all adults have a common goal – to support children. We also know everyone works incredibly hard and can often be stretched thin on time. If you *have* met with your child’s teacher so far this year, how have you helped establish a positive **relationship** for the year ahead? How has the teacher welcomed your input and ideas? Again, this is a prime opportunity to model what we expect of our students.
- If you have not yet met with your child’s teacher(s), you will soon have the opportunity during Parent Teacher Conferences. Be on the lookout for information about these early-November meetings.

Upcoming Family Engagement Opportunities

We understand how busy everyone is and how much happens each and every day. Below are dates for two of our Spruce Street initiatives – Learning Alongside your Child and Community Coffee. Both are terrific ways to maintain a strong **relationship** with the classroom and school community. I hope to see many of you there!

Learning Alongside your Child (times TBA)	
Pre-K – 2 nd Grade	3 rd - 6 th Grade
October 9, 2015	October 23, 2015
December 4, 2015	December 11, 2015
January 29, 2016	February 5, 2016
April 1, 2016	May 6, 2016

Community Coffee (8:45 a.m. in our cafeteria)	
Pre-K – 2 nd Grade	3 rd - 6 th Grade
October 30, 2015	November 6, 2015
January 6, 2016	January 13, 2016
March 9, 2016	March 23, 2016
May 20, 2016	May 20, 2016

Relationships aren’t always synonymous with friendship, but this quote seemed appropriate:

Friends are as companions on a journey, who ought to aid each other to persevere in the road to a happier life.

Let’s journey this year together. Please join me in thinking about how we can help foster positive **relationships** between all members of our Spruce community – child AND adult. Wishing you a wonderful October!