



1st Grade General Studies Purpose Statement Maryann Townsend, 1st Grade Teacher

The first grade year is the foundational year upon which all further academic success is built. During this pivotal year, the child emerges from the concrete realm to that of abstraction. This significant development is manifested by the move that the first grader makes into being a full-fledged participant in the symbolic world. Risk taking and original ideas are everyday happenings in this classroom.

Examples of this are abundant in this most meaningful year. The typical first grader begins the year full of literary experiences. We continue the acquisition of reading knowledge through an eclectic approach that features sight word recognition, phonetic awareness, and whole language as the basis for meaningful comprehension.

Writing naturally becomes a part of the child's artistic experience in the first grade. Good handwriting is one of the foundational skills of language development. We focus on correct letter formation with the Handwriting Without Tears program. The children write about what is alive and vital and real for them. Spelling, handwriting, punctuation, structure, and grammar are taught in an authentic context.

In Math, the children develop an understanding of concepts through experiences with real things rather than symbols. In order for number concepts to be meaningful, children must experience numbers as they occur in the real world. Throughout the year we work on different activities involving number, place value (through the teaching of money), addition and subtraction, logic, and the concept of probability. Providing a variety of activities from the different math strands stretches and challenges students at the same time.

In Social Studies, we concentrate on building friendships throughout the year, and friendship is a recurring theme in our work. Our science curriculum encompasses the study of solids and liquids through hands-on experiences.

The bodies, minds and social behavior of first graders are changing dramatically. The children have lots of energy, curiosity, imagination and enthusiasm. They are moving away from the home arena, to that of the school arena, and frequently enjoy the independence that follows. In the first grade we build a strong positive sense of belonging, embracing the values of Judaism, along with helping to foster an appreciation of wonder in the intellectual world.