**Questions about this year’s family journals:**

**1. Please share your thoughts about the family journals that were used in class this year (pros,cons, etc).**

**2. What was your favorite part about the family journals?**

**3. What was your child’s favorite part about the family journals?**

**4. What suggestions would you have to make these a better part of your child’s learning?**

Mrs. Clark’s Response:

1. Family journals were a **valuable experience**. Not always easy to get them to sit down and focus, but certainly **worthwhile**. They’re something we’ll **keep forever**. Reading back through them **brings up memories** of favorite things, places and people.And honestly, the spellings are hilarious. Such a great way to get children to sound out and attempt to spell words they’re not familiar with. Pros: starts getting the kids used to having a little homework. Gets them trying to **spell words and write with punctuation**. Gives us a chance to **talk** about favorite memories or activities. It’s interesting to see what makes an impression on them. Also gets the parents thinking about the question, and it’s often something positive to share with my child.

**Cons**- sometimes my child doesn’t want to sit down and do it. Not knowing how to spell words can be frustrating for them. But there’s usually a sense of accomplishment when it’s completed.

2. My favorite part was talking about the question,listening to their possible answers, and reading their answer when they finished. It seemed important to show that we can read what they write even though they didn’t necessarily know how to spell every word. I liked thinking about what I liked during childhood and sharing it with my kids.

3. Child’s favorite part - Decorating the front of the notebook. They **enjoyed reading the feedback** from the teacherwhen the journal was returned. Delaney liked **talking to her friend** about it and realizing they had the same answer.

4. Not sure about suggestions other than maybe emphasize to them at school that exact **spelling doesn’t matter** because that did cause some stress. My children wanted me to help them spell words but I had to explain they had to do it on their own and it’s ok if it’s not spelled perfectly.

Mrs. Yeager’s Response:

We had a difficult time with the journals only because Brayden had a **hard time writing in sentences**! I wish it would have worked out easier for him! But I realize that a lot of the other children had a couple of years of preschool where Brayden had not so he had a harder time and I realize **he had came a long ways from the beginning** of the school year! I am so grateful for what you have taught Brayden and I am praying that 1st grade starts off really well for him! Thanks for all you did for Brayden 😊

Mrs. Lanham’s Response:

1. The family journals were a **great way to connect with our children while teaching them about writing and spelling**. Every time I would sit downwith Emrys, he would think about what he wanted to say, and was more inclined to sound out words because they were HIS words.

2. I enjoyed seeing things from his perspective and sharing stories with him that would not have otherwise been brought up.

3. He enjoyed being able to talk about his answer.

4. I really enjoyed the idea, although I felt like we could have used a much **smaller journal** :)

Mrs. Smith’s Response:

1. I l**oved the family journals**. It gave us an opportunity to respond individually and discuss our answers after. It **opened up discussions** that we otherwise would never have. The only negative we experienced was carter having to say something positive about himself. He ended up getting angry when asked to discuss himself on a positive way.

2. My favorite part of the family journals was the **interaction and discussion** afterward.

3. Carter's favorite part of the journal was **reading the teacher responses** after they were returned to us.

4. Carter would become **frustrated over spelling** and wouldn't write things down because I wouldn't tell him the correct spelling. I'm not sure how you could fix that issue.

Mrs. Ferrell’s Response:

1. Sean and I loved writing on the journals! I thought it was a **great idea** not only to **encourage writing but also to encourage parent and child to pause and reflect** for a minute on topics we normally don't think about.

2. **My favorite** were questions that made me think of **what I was like at Sean's age**! You forget what's like to be a little kid! I was good to be reminded and share with him the things I like and did when I was his age.

3. **Sean** said his favorite thing about the journal was to talk about our family cruise! 😀 I think that was the very first question we answered, favorite family vacation. I think Sean really liked **talking about his favorite things and why they were his favorites**. He also like "what would you do if..." type of questions, he would get **very creative** in his answers!

4. I know the purpose of the journals is to help develop writing skills, but maybe allow kids to **draw and color, or paste pictures as part of their answer**. In addition to writing, of course, they need to write an answer first. I think **allowing art as an option** would make it more interesting for kids who love to express themselves with art.

Project Place Family Collaboration Teacher Panel

Stephanie Chenault

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1.Strategy Implemented:

* Family Journals (sent home to my kindergarten class on Mondays, returned to school on Fridays - although many students returned theirs on Tuesday wanting us to read them and respond immediately!)

2.Family Collaboration Area Most Addressed:

* Family Involvement

3. Challenges:

* Not all students would return their journals completed (we helped those who didn’t return theirs at school).
* Some students were frustrated with wanting to spell each word correctly (best guess spelling will be emphasized more to help with those frustrations in the future).
* For the students with the most challenges, it was difficult for them to write in sentences (sentence starters were provided for them).

4. Impacts on Students and Families:

* Worthwhile, valuable experience according to parents
* Helped families to share memories
* Improved spelling and punctuation
* Students enjoyed reading feedback from teachers
* Encouraged writing
* Students were able to be creative

Please write your email below if you would like for me to forward the Family Journals file to you.

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