

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION AT HILLTOP 2014-2015

Here's a quick glance at our documentation practice, and what you should do and expect as the family of a Hilltop child.

DOCUMENTATION OF GROUP EXPERIENCES:

- **When?** Each educator plans to post one piece of completed documentation on the curriculum board every week, so generally that means that three new pieces will be showing up on the board each week.
- **Where do I find it?** All new group stories will be posted on the curriculum board, and then will be filed in the Curriculum Binder as newer pieces are posted. For each posted piece that includes your child, a copy will also be placed in your child's own journal.
- **What is it?** Generally, these will be stories that involve a small group of children, or the whole class. For example: a neat thing that happened when everyone was out at the canal, photos and a description about cooking pizza for Eva's birthday, words and photos about the clay work that's been going on in the studio this week, a story about children discussing fairness at morning meeting, etc.
- **What should I do?** Some families like to read these stories in "real time" when they're posted on the wall. Others tend to catch up periodically by reading through their child's journal – we recommend doing this WITH your child so you can revisit the stories together! Feel free to bring your child's journal home: just let an educator know that you have it, and return it within a few days. PLEASE DO to write in or add to your child's journal... nearly every piece includes a question or prompt specifically for YOU, and we'd love to add your voice to the dialogue. Your ideas and insights can help us determine what provocations or activities to offer next.

DOCUMENTATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD:

- **When?** You should receive at least two individualized pieces of documentation, sometimes called "Learning Stories," about your child – usually one in the fall, and one in the spring. These stories are often (but not always) written by your child's "primary contact" teacher.
- **Where do I find it?** Learning Stories will be e-mailed to you directly, and also placed in your child's journal.
- **What is it?** Learning Stories are an educator's reflections on a particular moment or activity that your child experienced. Educators watch for a moment of play or interaction that engages them, and illustrates some particular competency or growth on the part of your child. Learning Stories are often framed as a message of appreciation from the educator to your child, describing the experience and what they thought about it.
- **What should I do?** A Learning Story is NOT COMPLETE until it includes a written response from the child's family. When you receive a Learning Story from your child's teacher, please read it and send back your thoughts, questions, and ideas. Feel free to pass the story along to other loved-ones for their feedback as well – we've sometimes had responses from multiple grandparents included in the final write-up!

OTHER WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION:

- You will receive a **weekly classroom e-mail** from one of the educators, which usually includes a story or two about big happenings of the week that's passed, a heads-up about things you need to know for the coming week, and any other important information that the educators want to convey. Please read these every week!
- There are lots of other ways – besides the written pieces described above – that teachers will be sharing and displaying stories from the classroom, including: posters and bulletin boards in the classroom or hallway, small books and binders about a particular material or topic, write-ups of conversations with you throughout the year, and more... Please keep an eye out for these windows into your child's experience!
- Stay tuned... As we move into the modern age, Hilltop is exploring digital technologies for sharing stories about your child, including blogs and online videos. We are excited about the possibilities these new media offer, while also remaining aware of the security concerns this may raise. Also, we highly value children and families being able to enjoy reading these stories together without additional screen time. We welcome your input!

PLEASE NOTE: The frequency and format of documentation can vary throughout the year – you might see fewer stories as children are settling in each fall, more group documents when In-Depth Investigations are in full swing, and so on...

ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN AT HILLTOP 2014-2015

A summary of our collaborative assessment process, and what you should do and expect as the family of a Hilltop child.

“PRIMARY CONTACT” EDUCATORS

- One of the educators in your child’s classroom has been identified as your family’s primary point of contact. While ALL the educators will be happy to speak with you anytime – about your child’s day, particular timely information, and so on – your primary contact educator will be working closely with you all year to track more significant developmental milestones, concerns, and ongoing conversations. He or she will regularly share important information back and forth with the whole teaching team.
- Your “primary” will meet with you once in the fall to get to know you and your family. Your other formal meeting will be a “Mid-Year Conference” in February or March. Beyond those two meetings, we encourage you to check in with your primary contact teacher informally at drop-off or pick-up, through e-mails and phone calls, or by requesting an in-person meeting.

COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT

- At Hilltop we believe that learning happens in relationship, and that’s why we want our assessment process to be a true collaboration between families and educators – a conversation rather than a report from us to you... You are the world’s leading expert on your child, and we looking forward to partnering with you in an effort to uncover current strengths and areas of growth for your child.
- In addition to our collaborative model for assessment of each child (see “Individual Assessment” below) we also invite each family to a spring “Collaborative Conference” in which educators meet with a group of families to discuss In-depth Investigation work being done by their children.

INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT: WHAT TO EXPECT

- two “Learning Stories” about your child, one in the fall, and one in the spring
- Mid-Year Conference: a 45-minute meeting with your child’s primary teacher, in February or March, in which you and the teacher together will “co-construct” a snapshot of how your child is progressing in each of the Developmental Areas listed below... you will be asked to review your child’s journal and learning story, and look over a Developmental Worksheet, to prepare
- a written report of the Mid-Year Conference, summarizing the thoughts that you and the teacher came up with for each Developmental Area, and noting any specific areas to keep an eye on through the year
- a Developmental Summary in May or June: a short note from your primary teacher, following up on the themes identified in the Mid-Year conference, and touching base on any progress in each of the Developmental Areas

DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS TO CONSIDER

- **Personal Development:** social, emotional, relating to others, developing a sense of self, initiative, friendships, negotiation skills
- **Physical Development:** using large and small muscles, physical confidence, coordination, risk-taking
- **Language Development:** listening, speaking, understanding, exploring reading and writing
- **Logical Development:** curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving, number sense, scientific inquiry
- **Creative Development:** artistic representation, dramatic play, sensory play, music, dance