

# *Letters to the Family* by Gloria Kirkland Holmes

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## **Suggestions for Using the Letters**

1. The letters may be used as guides or duplicates for the letters that you wish to send home with your students to communicate with the families.
2. Keeping in touch with families using newsletters works well. It gives the teacher the opportunity to tell about the program and activities that are being done in the classroom, tell of upcoming events, thank both children and adults for help given, ask for help donating materials and time, and to explain various aspects of the program.
3. Some letters are arranged in a chronological order for the school year, others are grouped as introductory or follow up letters for a specific unit. There are also letters to explain activities that take place in the classroom.
4. Sometimes there is more than one letter on the same topic. You may want to glean ideas from all of these before you put your own newsletter together.
- 5.. You should decide how often you wish to send letters home with the students, but the families of young students are always eager to know what is happening in the classroom and will welcome such letters.
6. Most letters are addressed to “Dear Families.” This form of address was used to cover the families of adoptive, fostered and those living with people other than parents.
7. I have included comments about individual children in some letters, and it is recommended that you do this as often as possible: young children like to read about themselves. You should ensure that every child is included at some point – keeping a list will help with this.
8. There are some letters that include comments on particular units of study, and if you would like to use these to create your own units, please feel free to do so.
9. These letters were written for Kindergarten and early elementary classrooms, but the idea could be adapted for upper elementary classrooms as well.
10. By maintaining a regular communication system you will learn a great deal about the background of the students on your classroom, and this will be beneficial for everyone.

Dear Families,

This week we are starting a new unit: Valentine's Day and the Post Office. Some of our major concepts to be discussed are:

1. Valentine's Day is a holiday that has been observed for many years.
2. Valentine's Day is a time to remember people we love by sending them cards and gifts.
3. We can bring Valentine's to school for our school friends.
4. We can send Valentine's through the mail to friends and loved ones who live in another city.

Some of our objectives are that:

1. The child will recognize the names of his friends.
2. The child will print some or all of the names of his friends.
3. The child will cut or trace a recognizable heart.
4. The child will participate in a field trip to the Post Office and mail a letter to his home.
5. The children will participate in the planning of a party and help in carrying out the plans.

Wednesday morning our class will be taking a trip to the post office. Please send an envelope that has your home address and a stamp on it with your child on Tuesday or Wednesday. This will enable your child to have the experience of sending and receiving a letter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gloria Kirkland-Holmes

Dear Families,

Welcome to our classroom!

You are now entering the world of the four and five year old. If our furniture is uncomfortable and too small for you, remember that it fits us just fine.

If you must walk around our games, toys and block structures, remember that it is throughout this kind of manipulation and experimentation that we learn.

If we are noisy as we play in the playhouse, it is because we are learning to live with each other.

If we seem to be talking too much, remember that this is the way we learn our language.

If we come up and talk to you, don't be surprised, as we are open, friendly and curious, and we want to know you as our friend.

Enjoy our world, and when you leave we hope you carry with you some of our enthusiasm for living and learning.

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**Housekeeping Area**

Is very appealing to children. Dramatic play flourishes as the children find a link between their home and their center. Children are free to find out how it would feel to be teacher, doctor, parent - they explore the roles they may one day assume.

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**Painting is...**

**Relaxing**

**Fun**

**Creating designs**

**Thinking**

**Good for me!!!**

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**Sharing**

**What I brought to school today is a secret--can you guess?**

**If what I'm wearing is pretty or unique--tell me!!**

**May I leave my special sharing things with you, so that you may share yours with me?**

**Thanks!!!**

## Letters for Winter

Dear Families,

“Books and Storytelling” is the unit we began this week. We are focusing on the Caldecott books, which are books having won an award for their illustrations. Some Caldecott winners for this age include:

<u>The Little Island</u>	L. Weisgard
<u>White Snow, Bright Snow</u>	R. Durvoisin
<u>The Big Snow</u>	B. & E. Hader
<u>The Snowy Day</u>	E. Keats
<u>Where the Wild Things Are</u>	M. Sendak
<u>Noah’s Ark</u>	P. Spier
<u>Ox Cart Man</u>	B. Cooney

The objectives of this unit are:

1. to begin learning the parts of the book
2. to encourage proper care of books
3. make children aware of the library and what it contains besides books
4. to encourage the reading of books
5. to develop an appreciation of good books.

Special activities include:

1. Making a “My Book”
2. Make dictated books
3. Library dramatic play center
4. Decorate bookmarks

Sincerely,