Welcome Back from Spring Break
Welcome back, we hope you enjoyed your Spring Break! We hope that you were able to spend some time with your family and friends and that you are ready for the last few weeks of the 2018-2019 school year.

Wear Pink
Our curriculum color theme for April is PINK. We will celebrate this color by encouraging students and staff to wear something pink on Thursday, April 11.

Early Dismissal
On Wednesday, April 17, students will be dismissed early and arrive home 1 ½ hours earlier than normal. Be sure to mark your calendars.

Festival of the Arts (FOTA)
Festival of the Arts will be May 3, 2019 and this year’s theme is “Be someone’s hero!” – focusing on fictional superhero’s and our everyday real-life heroes!

Our FOTA Committee is asking for donations for the raffle event. If you or someone you know would like to donate any new items for our raffle this year, please bring them in to the front office or send them to school with your student by April 19. In previous years, we’ve had families donate gift baskets, gift cards, household items, handmade items and so on. As much as we appreciate donations, please do not feel pressured to donate! We enjoy making this an enjoyable, fun day for our students and families and hope to see you there! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Beth at bmeengs@oaisd.org.

Notice
It is with much sadness that we inform you of the passing of Sam Koets. Sam was a student at Ottawa Area Center since 2009. He was loved by many and will be greatly missed.
OT Department

OT Department: Mary Beth, Danielle, Shari, and Mindy

April is OT month, making it the perfect time for us to express our gratitude to the amazing students, parents, caregivers, and staff who help make our work as support staff so rewarding and successful. Our passion is helping the students at OAC participate in what they want and need to do, by adapting the environment and/or activity to fit the person. We recognize that many individuals experience significant challenges related to their participation in mealtime, and we wanted to share some strategies that may be helpful if this is a challenge in your home.

General strategies to help your child be more successful at mealtime:

- Change the location of mealtime. Is eating at the kitchen table a struggle?
- Try setting up a small table in another room, or laying out a blanket for a picnic.
- Use a visual schedule of the mealtime routine.
- Provide sensory input before mealtime; give what their body needs to get the wiggles out!
- Provide a preferred placemat, plate, and utensils; what does your child want to use?
- Start with small expectations, (i.e. sitting for 10-count), then slowly increase the time.
- Maybe your child is starting with just engaging/playing with the food.
- Use a visual timer so your child knows the expectation (i.e. Time Timer app).
- Model eating for your child, or use video modeling as children get older.
- Play with preferred toys only at mealtime, fade this out (using toy as reward/reinforcement).
- Learn to wait: Avoid giving more reinforcement for not doing something than doing it.

Making it fun: (Funbites and ezpz mats)

- Use cookie cutters to present food in familiar shapes.
- Include your child in the food prep/cooking experience.
- Serve food family style to familiarize child with a variety of food – talk about it, touch it, smell it.
- Read fun books about food, play with pretend foods, and explore sensory bins.

These strategies help build relationships, reduce anxiety, and promote success. When you challenge your child, things will often get worse before they get better. Start with simple steps for short durations, and celebrate the small victories of your child’s participation in mealtime routines.

Parent Survey

If you did not get the opportunity to complete the Parent Teacher Conference Survey, please consider filling one out on-line by clicking on the following link: https://forms.gle/8sEbfawTJZ3MoGGL6