

May 2, 2004

Dear Parents:

Throughout each session, Alex was interested in the materials I selected and the activities I created. He seemed comfortable, and he demonstrated creative ideas during both reading and writing tasks. He also became a more willing writer as our sessions progressed and has improved his use of details and descriptions in his writing. I thoroughly enjoyed his enthusiasm for story telling and for life in general. During each session, he was usually excited about something that had taken place during the day or over the weekend, and he rarely came without a smile on his face.

When we first started meeting, we discussed what types of things Alex enjoyed reading, and from this discussion we established a theme for our tutoring sessions. We actually decided on two separate themes, one for reading and one for our reading incentive poster. For reading, an animal theme was chosen because Alex enjoys being around and learning about animals. For the reading incentive poster, baseball was chosen. Alex decided he liked baseball, but he didn't want to read about it. The poster was a way to keep track of the books we read and to motivate Alex to read more. However, he didn't seem as if he really needed motivation in that area. One of his favorite books that we read was The Wretched Stone by Chris Van Allsburg. Throughout the sessions, we focused primarily on two reading goals, which consisted of improved comprehension and enhanced writing.

On a couple of different occasions, we worked on an activity that encompassed both the comprehension and writing goals. During this activity, Alex used a list of story clues, which were words and/or phrases from the upcoming story. These clues dealt with the characters, setting, problem and resolution of the story. Alex used these clues to write his own story before he knew the title of the book or what the story was actually about. He had to use the clues in the order that they were given, but he could change the tense or the wording of a phrase if he needed to. He was encouraged to frequently check his story to ensure his story was making sense. When he finished his own story, he read it and then we would read the book together. At the end of the book, we compared his story to

the original and discussed similarities and differences between the two. During the reading, I would ask Alex questions about what was taking place in the story and what he thought might happen next. We would also discuss any words he may not know and at the end, select words that were important to the story to add to our "Word Wall." Occasionally, we would work with these words to put them into categories or to discuss the different meanings of the words. Alex was also asked to use some of the words in sentences.

On three separate occasions, I taught Alex specific lessons, one dealing with the use of a thesaurus, one with adding details to sentences and paragraphs and one on determining the appropriate form of a letter. Through the first half of our sessions, I had been observing Alex's writing and determined that we needed to work on using different words in our writing to make it more interesting and adding details to make the reader get a better idea of what the story was about. The letter-writing lesson was decided after we wrote a letter to the Bureau of Land Management and Alex struggled with how to write the letter and what he should say. This prompted my decision to look at different types of letters and then write a friendly letter to someone.

I would like to sincerely thank you for the opportunity to tutor Alex. He truly was a joy to work with and to learn from as well. I wish him the best of luck in his future reading endeavors. I have included within the portfolio a list of suggested books, magazines, and websites that I think Alex would enjoy.

Thank you,
Carrie D.