



## Dino's Welcome Story



Dear Dino

Welcome to another year in the Sweet Cherries. I am so happy you are here to play and learn with in our classroom. The first two weeks of this school year have shown me so much about what you have learned, what you are interested in, and how you have grown.

In the photos above, you were writing--- and then later, re-reading---your plans for catching the monster. Earlier, you and Sammy were very excited about the monster that was in the room, running to corners, looking in cubbies. I wondered out loud if it might be helpful to write down your ideas. Both of you gathered paper and markers and got right down to business! Dino, as you were writing and drawing, you heard other kids yelling, "Let's go get the monster!" With a strong voice you answered, "We're coming!" As you drew, you said, "This is my trap". When I asked you what your note said now, you responded, "I can't tell you. I don't know the note now because I write more letters on it." "What letters did you write?", I asked. "Uh, I don't know what letters I write because there are too many letters in here...so I will do some letters on the back!" You flipped your paper over and did just that!

The excitement over catching monsters lessened during the afternoon, and when I noticed you in your cubby later, it looked like you were still thinking about it as you quietly looked at your plans from earlier.

## **What this means:**

WOW! Dino, where do I even start? Since this past spring and summer, I have noted your growing interest in using the languages of writing and drawing to express yourself. I watched with barely concealed delight as you chose so purposely and confidently to do this work!

As you wrote your face showed me how important it was to get the instructions for getting this monster exactly right! I noticed how you were holding your crayon with one hand while your other hand kept the paper firmly on the table. Your fingers and hands are getting so strong, and this strength will help you when you choose to express your thinking and feelings on paper.

I was interested in how you seemed to make the distinction between a drawing -"This is my trap"-and the letters you wrote. Being able to see this difference shows that you are starting to understand how writing is another way to make your thinking visible. Also, I wonder what you were thinking as you turned to the page over to write more letters. Did you think you could identify them if there weren't so many together?

When you went back to look at your written plans later that afternoon, you demonstrated how meaningful this document was for you. Dino, you are understanding that words contain important information. Knowing this means that you are becoming a reader!

Dino, I know how much you love to pretend and I am so excited to see how you are incorporating writing into your dramatic play. Your interest in letters and words connects you to your friends, like Sammy. I noticed you, from time to time, watching what he was putting in his plans. You seemed to easily and generously accept his way of showing his ideas, while feeling proud of your own plan. Dino, you are taking so much pride in your work these days! I love the passion and enthusiasm that infuses your world.

## **Our next steps...**

Dino, every day you remind me of the joy and playfulness of living in this world. I want to share in your enthusiastic, creative vision, and offer you materials that support your active imagination. As your interest in words and drawing continues, there are so many things I envision! When you build, I will invite you to draw what you made, and to write down your words about your creations. I am wondering if you would like to make

books about some of your favorite things, like leaf blowers and power tools. I am so excited to see your interests expanding. I honor your spirit and I promise to nurture your love of the world in any way I can. This is going to be a really fun and exciting year at school with you Dino!

With admiration and love,

Joan

## **Family Response**

Dino, You are doing such a good job writing and planning out booby traps. I hope you catch that monster in that trap and that it doesn't eat you because you taste like chicken and cheese."

Love your Dad

"Oh thank you, thank you! I taught him how to write. Thank you, for thanking me."

Your big sister, Lola

Dino, on this day, you were so thrilled to show me what you wrote that we left school quickly so you could share with me about your day. I am so excited for you to be able to express yourself in this new way and share your ideas with me at a later time. I miss you so much during the day and I like to be able to hear about all of the interesting things you did at school or with your grandparents. I am so proud of you. I hope you continue to share more with me about what you did each day. I love peeking in the window of your classroom and seeing you build, draw, and pretend with Sammy, Joey, and all of your other new classmates! But I don't get to see most of it so please keep telling me about what you made and did. I love you so much!

XOXO, Mom

Dino, you brought this to my house and showed me the treasure map and computer that you made with Sammy, explaining it all. I've noticed that you usually write small letters and you are very focused and thoughtful while writing. You seemed especially proud of the computer screen that you filled with all of your own writing. We set it up on the desk with a pencil so that you can add to it next time you are at Grandma's.

--Grandma