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March 11, 2016

Dear Families,

Some of you have heard us talk about this, (or read about it on our blog) but we officially received our new Quality First star rating and we will continue on as a Five Star center. Quality First is Arizona's Quality Improvement and Rating System. Participation in Quality First is voluntary. Every preschool that participates receives a rating from one to five stars that reflects the quality level of the preschool. Quality First believes that schools that earn a rating of 3, 4, or 5 stars are schools that offer quality care. 5 Stars is indicative of the highest quality, and while the assessment is a snapshot in time, we are proud to continue as one of the highest rated schools in Arizona. We believe there are three other 5 Star preschools within 10 miles of us, none of whom serve the diverse age range and clientele that we do. Quality First participation includes private preschools such as Outer Limits, public preschools run by the school districts and family child care located in people's homes. Please congratulate your child's teachers when you see them – we really are lucky to work with such a dedicated team.

Thank you to those of you who came to our Love of Reading event last month. We played with all sorts of messy things, made guitars while listening to music, painted with real shoes, ate waffles and listened to stories. Special thanks to Troy Allen (Olivia and Logan's Dad) for volunteering to read to the group. He is offering repeat performances on demand. Just ask him. Really.

We encourage you to take advantage of the sun setting later in the evening. Consider picking up your children and heading off to the park. Be intentional and schedule quality time together. Try to spend time together without televisions, tablets and cell phones as much as possible. Think back to the great things you remember from when you were young and try to recreate those experiences for your own children.

Next month we will tell you all about our summer swim program, pass out permission slips and begin talking to the classes about pool safety. Our first week of swimming will

be the week after Memorial Day. We are all excited to get started and see the huge smiles that swimming brings out.

As we mentioned last month, we have been trying to upgrade our website. We would like to add testimonials to the website, both video and written. We have forms in the office where you can write a few sentences about what you appreciate about Outer Limits. If you are willing to record a video testimonial, just let us know so we can figure out a great time. Thank you!

Occasionally children come to school in the morning saying they don't want to be at school, they want to stay home with mom or dad. Typically well meaning parents say, "I know, but just like I have to go to work, you have to go to school." We would like to encourage you to try something different. When your children are in ear shot, refrain from saying anything negative about your job. Instead, always talk about your job as something that you "get to do" as opposed to "have to do". Young children need to learn that work is something you are looking forward to. While we don't want you to lie to your children, we also know that burdening your young children with the stress of your job is not a burden they are equipped to handle. Stress is all around us and it can be stressful for children to hear you talk about work in negative ways. As children get older it becomes more appropriate (and important) to talk about the challenges you experience at work if the conversation is intended to teach your child about careers, work relationships and the benefits of education. Your children are incredibly smart and highly influenced by your words and actions. We know if you are consistent with talking about how you "get" to go to work, your children will benefit. Sometimes it really is all about semantics!

Some of you have wondered if we will be open for Spring Break for your school age children. Yes! The Mountain Lion teachers will be here and we hope your children will join them starting on Friday, March 18<sup>th</sup> (except for Presidio). Spring Break for all schools lasts through March 25<sup>th</sup>.

That's all for this newsletter. Please think about writing something for our website – we would appreciate it!

Take care,

*Minnie, Blanca, Debbie and Bill*