Library
During library class first grade students are encouraged to become increasingly independent and thoughtful in their book choices, and to practice different book selection strategies. Library time is also used to read stories that expand on their classroom studies. First graders read and discuss personal narrative and books about families, comparing and contrasting the experiences depicted in these books to their personal experiences and making connections to what they’re been learning in their classroom.

Literacy
This semester first grade students will use literature to explore the concept of Connection and the theme of Family. As readers they will make connections between literature, events in their own lives and knowledge that they have from the world, while as writers they will work on drafting these stories and ideas in a clear and focused way. Word study skills and decoding strategies will be strengthened as students find and explore similarities and differences in sounds and letter patterns that help them with read and write unfamiliar words.

Mathematics
Mathematical investigations in first grade will be focusing on developing children’s conceptual understanding of early number sense and operations. From counting and comparing to sequencing and sorting, children will be encouraged to make connections between concrete and abstract representations of number and quantity. Explorations with the twenty-frame model and other visual images will guide children toward developing relationships between basic facts with flexibility, efficiency, and accuracy. Story problems will also provide real-life contexts for understanding addition situations. An emphasis on interpretation and representation will continue to support children in visualizing and making connections between word problems and their mathematical meanings. Throughout the year students will have opportunities to engage in both individual and collaborative work focused on deepening their understandings in order to make sense of the mathematics in their lives.

Performing Arts: Dance
In Dance classes, first grade students are solidifying their understanding and execution of basic movement skills such as freeze, levels, musicality, directional changes, locomotor movements, safety while still and traveling, and personal and relational spatial awareness. Students are continuing to develop their abilities in listening, observation, and cooperation while they practice more refined performance skills such as changes in energy levels, rhythmic patterns, and movement qualities. They are learning to relate what they have been studying in other disciplines, to all the activities they are exploring in dance, such as Lines, Shapes, and Feelings, Traveling Trios, and Dance the Connections. During the units of study on Family and Connection, students formulate connections on physical, emotional, and intellectual levels. They learn to work with a partner and an ensemble while creating their own movement interpretations of nature, of lines and pathways, and of their personal narrative writing about their family experiences.
Performing Arts: Music
In first grade music class, the students will work on recognizing and performing a steady beat using a variety of means such as movement, body percussion, and instrumental playing. Instrumental playing includes the use of un-pitched percussion instruments and barred instruments; xylophones, glockenspiels and metallophones. Movement and instrumental improvisation will be explored through games and stories, which support the overall theme of Family and the concept of Connection. The semester will culminate with a Family Concert, featuring songs and dances that reflect our diverse community. Preparing for this concert offers the students the opportunity to develop their singing skills and musical memories, while expanding on their song and dance repertoire. Your children will strengthen their musicianship and community ties, along with learning about performance etiquette through this joyful experience.

Science
In our kitchen science unit children are learning that chemical and physical changes connect different substances in predictable ways. Experiments include dissolving various solvents in water, growing salt crystals, making butter and creating simple chromatograms. In a series of yeast experiments at the end of the semester, children will investigate how changing one variable at a time affects the outcome. All of these experiences help students develop the scientific skills of asking questions, making predictions, noticing patterns, recording observations and communicating their ideas.

Social Emotional Learning
In first grade, social emotional learning skills and objectives are embedded in the children’s study of Connection. Through lessons that address essential questions involving the myriad connections among people, and between ourselves and the natural world, the children acquire a deeper understanding of themselves as unique and important members of their own families and communities, and the complex interrelationships among people in many different settings. Working in large and small groups, the children also work toward meeting SEL objectives, such as developing an emotions vocabulary, learning to identify the non-verbal cues of others and responding appropriately to their feelings, and showing effort and assuming responsibility for their own actions and attitudes.

Social Studies
First grade students explore the theme Family and the concept of Connection during the first semester. They begin by investigating connections that exist between their classmates. They make connection maps to exhibit their understanding. Towards the middle of the semester, our focus shifts to connections amongst and between different families. The students are challenged to create a family museum that highlights these connections. To start the process, the students use the research question, “what makes a museum a museum?” To guide the inquiry, the students visit several museums to gather information and look at the characteristics of highly engaging and high-quality exhibits. From there, the students engaged in several learning experiences that helped us narrow down our big ideas for the museum. Students work collaboratively to synthesize the information they collect and design exhibits that teach museum visitors about the many connections first grade families have to each other.

Spanish Language/Literacy
In first grade Spanish, students have been connecting their knowledge of the language to the theme of Family as well as to their daily school life. Students began making connections to others by learning how to describe themselves in Spanish and learning how those physical traits make us similar and different to other people. Students apply their language skills by practicing new and old vocabulary in Spanish through didactic activities, games and songs. Spanish classes are designed so that every student has the opportunity to listen to, speak, read and write key vocabulary in the target language. They also make literary connections while
reading various books that highlight the theme of Family. Students are learning about families and cultures that have similarities and differences from their own. Throughout the semester students will discover how we can create different types of connections to others and how that can change our perspective of the meaning of family. In first grade, we strive to continue building a love of language and cultural learning where students are eager to participate.

Technology
Students in First Grade are becoming skilled at using technology learning tools in their classroom like laptops and iPads. Using their personally assigned iPad, students are developing routines, safety protocols, and understandings of symbols inherent in iPad applications. These understandings will promote independent use across disciplines. In addition, first graders will learn how to use an iterative approach to solving problems and testing ideas through coding. Using their personally assigned world wide web accessible code.org accounts, students will learn how patterns are used to create algorithms to solve puzzles and mazes. Creating loops, sequences and variables will allow students to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills; a skill set that we hope transfers to all their disciplines.

Students will engage in the study of simple machines through the use of Lego Education WeDo kits. Students will learn to construct simple machine models and program them to come to life. Through construction and programming, students reinforce ideas around problem solving, collaboration, design, and engineering. Students will learn about motors, gears, pulleys, and cams and continue to make real world connections. This unit will culminate in the construction of each student's very own automaton constructed from everyday materials.

Visual Arts
In the Art Studio the first graders will develop their creative and problem-solving skills while learning how to work responsibly and respectfully in a collaborative space. As part of the first semester’s focus on the connection theme, students will explore lines, shapes and colors through a variety of art mediums. First, they will explore various lines and shapes with drawing materials, and then they will learn to create lines by sewing. The students will be learning about sewing materials and practicing how to thread a needle, sew, and finish sewing by making double-knots at the end. During the collage unit, they will focus on cutting and combining various shapes to create things they know.

Wellness
The first grade students will be exploring a variety of Wellness topics this year. They will review and practice concepts of personal and general space, how to move safely in close proximity to others and further their mastery of locomotor movements. In addition, students will gain an understanding of nutrition related topics and how to make conscious food choices based on a traffic light concept (red, yellow, and green light food categories). The students will make the distinction between tossing and throwing techniques, while solidifying their catching skill set. The first graders will continue to explore different types of equipment both independently and in small groups and will also begin a study of balance, flexibility and strength.