Critical thinking is the identification and evaluation of evidence to guide decision making. A critical thinker uses broad in-depth analysis of evidence to make decisions and communicate his/her beliefs clearly and accurately."

"Critical thinking is reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe and do."

**A SUPER-STREAMLINED CONCEPTION OF CRITICAL THINKING**

Assuming that critical thinking is reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do a critical thinker:

1. Is open-minded and mindful of alternatives
2. Tries to be well-informed
3. Judges well the credibility of sources
4. Identifies conclusions, reasons, and assumptions
5. Judges well the quality of an argument, including the acceptability of its reasons, assumptions, and evidence
6. Can well develop and defend a reasonable position
7. Asks appropriate clarifying questions
8. Formulates plausible hypotheses; plans experiments well
9. Defines terms in a way appropriate for the context
10. Draws conclusions when warranted, but with caution
11. Integrates all items in this list when deciding what to believe or do

Try these strategies with your child(ren) at home

**Ask open-ended questions.** Asking questions that don't have one right answer encourages children to respond creatively without being afraid of giving the wrong answer.

**Categorize and classify.** Classification plays an important role in critical thinking because it requires identification and sorting according to a rule, or set of rules, that kids must discover, understand, and apply. If you play classification games at home, be sure to follow up the activity with questions about the similarities and differences between the groups. You can sort everything from dirty laundry to Legos to produce to doll clothes to promote critical thinking.

**Work in groups.** In a group setting, students are exposed to the thought processes of their peers. Thus, they can begin to understand how others think and that there are multiple ways of approaching problems — not just one correct way.

**Make decisions.** Help your child consider pros and cons, but don't be afraid to let her make a wrong choice. Then evaluate the decision later. Ask your child, "How do you feel about your decision? What would you do differently next time?"

**Find patterns.** Whatever you're doing, whether it's going to the park or watching television, encourage your child to look for patterns or make connections for critical thinking practice. For example, relate a favorite television show to a real-life situation. Or, while driving in the car, have your child identify different shapes in roads signs and in the windows and roofs of passing houses.
Welcome to Kindergarten at the DSBN!

OPEN HOUSE

February 7, 2013 4:00-6:00pm

Gordon Public School is offering Full Day Kindergarten in September 2013!

For more information regarding the registration process please visit:

MAD SCIENCE AT GORDON

Mad Science, the world’s leading provider of educational and entertaining science programs for children is coming to Gordon School. Their mission is to spark the imagination and curiosity of children everywhere by providing them with fun, entertaining and exciting activities that instill a clear understanding of what science is really all about and how it affects the world around them. They use exciting activities and spectacular demonstrations to capture the attention and imagination of children as we found out during our assembly.

Both the students and teachers will be thrilled on Feb. 8th at 1:45 PM when Mad Science comes to the school to do a Spectacular Science show.

Mad Science also performs Birthday Parties, Camps and Special Events. Give them a call at 905-937-1878 and watch out for them in Malls, at Fairs, Festivals and Scouts and Guides.

www.madscience.org/Niagara

SNOW! SNOW! SNOW!

Gordon School’s rule is “leave it on the ground”. Please reinforce this at home. For the safety of all students, we ask them not to throw or kick snow. We have a “1-2-3” policy. Each time a student throws snow, a letter goes home and the incidences are tracked. The 1st time is a warning, the 2nd time is a detention and parent contact and the 3rd time involves removal of privileges. Each situation is dealt with considering mitigating factors. Using progressive discipline, formal suspension may result.
School Day begins at 8:50 A.M. We are noticing an increase in late arrivals to schools. When students are late they are missing out on valuable classroom time and it is also disruptive to the students in class. We appreciate your support in having students arrive to school on time.

**HAVING FUN WITH MATH**

On those cold days when you’re stuck in the house, take the time to play games with your child. Play board games, dice games, card games, dominoes, chess and backgammon. Solve puzzles together.

*While playing ask questions:*  
- Who is winning? By how much?  
- What number do you want to roll? Not want to roll?  
- How many cards do you have left?  
- Which card would be the most helpful? Least helpful?  
- How many dots are there on this domino?  
- Where could you move that piece?  
- Which piece do you want to move next time?  
- How did you know that puzzle piece went there?  
- How did you add up those two dice? Cards?  
- Ask questions about their thinking?  
- Why did you move this piece instead of that piece?  
- What did you do to try to win the game or solve the puzzle?  
- Would you do the same thing next time? Why or why not?  
- What could you do to make it easier to win this game?

*Remember to keep it FUN!*

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**FEBRUARY 2013 NEWSLETTER DRAW**

Fill in the answers to the following “skill-testing” questions, then hand into your teacher who will ensure it is placed in the draw for a prize.

1. When is Kindergarten Registration?
2. What time does school begin?

Names:____________________________________

**Newsletter Questions and Answers**

Do you have any questions about the school or curriculum that you would like to see answered in our newsletter? If so, send it in with the newsletter draw form and we will do our best to provide the answer in next month’s edition.

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Winter is a time of wonder for many children; many enjoy the crisp air, the freshly fallen snow and participating in a whole host of exciting winter sports and activities.

Although we feel it is important for students to spend some time outside each day exercising and socializing with their peers, there are times when bitterly cold temperatures and other inclement weather conditions require that we keep children inside.

Because Niagara is such a large geographical area, and weather conditions may vary from one municipality to the next, the decision whether or not to hold recess outdoors is made by the individual school principal. When making this decision, principals will often consult with neighbouring schools, talk with parents as they arrive in the morning, and if the decision to send children outside is made, will equip yard duty staff with walkie-talkies so that they can communicate with the office to sound the bells to bring students in earlier.

The health and well-being of our students is a top priority at the District School Board of Niagara, and if it is determined that the weather conditions pose a risk to their safety, students will be kept indoors. Extreme cold weather alerts issued by the Niagara Region are often good indicators that students will stay inside.

Even when temperatures are not low enough to necessitate an indoor recess, it still may be quite cold outside. Here are a few tips to help ensure that your child stays warm during the cold winter months.

- Try to send children to school with plenty of layers, such as long underwear, sweatshirts, sweaters and pullovers. Layering their clothing will allow them to add or remove items depending on the weather.
- Students should have a warm winter coat that repels the snow, sleet and rain, while blocking the wind.
- Warm socks and boots will keep their feet warm and dry in the snow and slush.
- Hats are one of the most important parts of dressing warmly in the winter. A thick winter hat will keep students from losing too much of that essential body heat.
- Put on a good pair of gloves or mittens that are water-resistant as well. Gloves will keep kids’ hands toasty warm and protect their skin from becoming damaged by the wind and chill.
STAFFING UPDATE

- Mrs. Gaspich is taking on the role of Learning Resource Teacher temporarily until Mr. Csuka returns in the month of March.
- Mrs. Demers teaching Grade 1G until Mrs. Gaspich returns to Grade 1 in March.
- Mrs. Hillhouse is teaching half time Primary Prep coverage in the p.m. until March.
- Ms. Carol Purslow assumed the role of Youth Counselor on January 29th as Mrs. Hamilton joined the DSBN Academy on a more sustained basis.

French Immersion Registration

In January the DSBN held registration for Grade 1 at selected sites and Grade 4 at all sites. The French Department is currently accepting applications on the DSBN website [www.dsbn.org/fi](http://www.dsbn.org/fi). Application packages will also be available at your child’s school starting January 7, 2013. Registration closes on **February 15th, 2013**.

“The ability to communicate in French is a valuable skill, because French is one of Canada’s two official languages and because it is a language used widely around the world. Research confirms that knowledge of a second language strengthens first-language skills and that the ability to speak two or more languages generally enhances reasoning and problem solving skills, as well as creative thinking skills. Learning a second language not only strengthens students’ ability to communicate, but also develops their capacity to understand and respect other cultures. In this way, second-language learning prepares students to participate more effectively in the workplace and in the global economy, and provides them with a distinct advantage in a number of careers, both in Canada and internationally.” (pg 3 of the E.F./F.I. Curriculum Document (C.D.) 2001)

2013 Make Change for Children Campaign

At The Education Foundation of Niagara we work all year long to raise funds to dedicate back to students in need so that every student has equal access to education regardless of their financial constraints. We are writing to tell you that now is the time and together we can help make change for students in need through the Make Change for Children Campaign, happening February 25th – March 1st.

All funds raised from the campaign go directly into the Poverty and Emergency Relief Fund, which responds to requests by schools on behalf of DSBN students in need. This initiative supports the extraordinary, emergency, personal and school-related needs of individual students brought about by financial hardship. Since 2008 over $100,000 has subsidized 4000 students in areas of poverty relief as a result of our annual Make Change for Children Campaign.

We are asking for your school to participate in our 6th annual Make Change for Children Campaign. Last year 76 DSBN Schools helped us raise over $15,000, and our goal for this year is to get 100% DSBN school participation. We hope that your school will choose to support this worthy cause.

For more information, or to donate, please contact Dara Goulet at 905-641-2929 ext. 54103, or dara.goulet@dsbn.org

Can one child change the world? Here’s your chance to change his world.
# STUDENT RECOGNITION ASSEMBLY

## December 2012

Character Trait: **CARING**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Academic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Gaspich</td>
<td>S. Kearns</td>
<td>J. Wirkkunen</td>
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<td>Mrs. Filion</td>
<td>E. Goss</td>
<td>E. Hicks</td>
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<td>Mme. Tremblay</td>
<td>A. Baird</td>
<td>C. Cheynowski</td>
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<td>Mrs. Edwards</td>
<td>E. Brewer</td>
<td>G. Jason</td>
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<td>Mr. Snelgrove</td>
<td>L. Mista</td>
<td>R. Ellsworth</td>
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<td>Ms. Knockaert</td>
<td>C. Jenkins</td>
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<td>Mrs. McLean</td>
<td>A. Haist</td>
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<td>Mrs. Clarke</td>
<td>G. Datema</td>
<td>K. Schellenberg</td>
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<td>Mlle. Cote-Penrose</td>
<td>E. Libby</td>
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<td>Mlle. Benson</td>
<td>S. Beard</td>
<td>T. McCrae</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Smythe-Janese</td>
<td>A. Haist</td>
<td>D. Deciccio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Slaght</td>
<td>A. Fransden</td>
<td>N. Rotchill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Charles</td>
<td>S. Crawford</td>
<td>B. Vasko</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Rush</td>
<td>A. Vermolen</td>
<td>C. Madere</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Corkery</td>
<td>H. Rodrigue</td>
<td>J. Zacharuk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mme. Colonna Spagnolo (Core French)</td>
<td>A. Abell</td>
<td>C. Borowski</td>
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DSBN eFlyers

Being environmentally conscious has never been more important. By conserving power, increasing recycling and implementing other waste reduction strategies, students and schools across the DSBN have made the environment an important priority.

In the past, we have offered a free flyer distribution service to community organizations. While we value our many community partnerships, we also understand the importance of reflecting the leadership of our students who promote a culture of conservation at school and at home.

The DSBN is pleased to launch our eFlyer service. Rather than sending thousands of flyers to our schools, we are instead posting electronic flyers on our eFlyer service. We are pleased to support the community with this site, and save thousands of trees in the process. Please visit the eFlyers by clicking on the link below or simply copy and paste it into your browser.

http://eflyers dsbn org/default aspx

The Art Gallery of Welland

Saturday Art & Craft classes for CHILDREN

Programs location: Downtown Welland in “The Church House”
Central United Church, 12 Young St. (at King St.), Welland, Ontario-beside Early Years Center.

REGISTRATION
(905) 356-1514

Saturday Classes Cost $75/child
• 7 weeks *ALL MATERIALS SUPPLIED
• Free AGW Certificate Program registration! Inquire!
• March Break Camps $65/$130
• Early Spring, March Break and Late Spring courses available

For more information please visit: http://www.artgalleryofwelland.ca/
It’s all about FAMILY!

Family Day Free Skate! Monday, February 18th, 2013

Lace up! Come out and have some fun! Celebrate Family Day with some fun family time! Free Skate time sponsored by FACS Niagara and MENTHOLATUM will be offered at the following locations and times:

- 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
  - Leisureplex
  - Peach King Arena
  - Seymour - Hannah 4 Pad
  - Jordan Arena
  - West Lincoln/Smithville Arena
  - Meridian Arena
  - Wainfleet Arena
  - TD RINK at the Brink

*Niagara Falls (Free skate and helmet rentals only at Niagara Falls)

Free product samples available at select locations while quantities last.

Foster Families Needed

Open your hearts and your home to local children and youth in need.

For more information on providing safe and temporary care for children in need, call 905-937-7731 www.facsniagara.on.ca

*Fort Erie
Grimsby
St. Catharines
West Lincoln
Wainfleet
Niagara-on-the-Lake

Co-Sponsored by
Family and Children’s Services Niagara
www.menholaum.ca