BAD SEED

BY MAXWELL ANDERSON
DIRECTED BY
EZRA DULIT-GREENBERG & SIMON WOLFE

**AUDITION PACKET**

DECEMBER 11-14, 2013. THE LITTLE THEATRE.
GENERAL INTEREST MEETING: 9/4
AUDITION WORKSHOP: 9/6
AUDITIONS: 9/23, 9/24
CALLBACKS: 9/25

Please sign up for an audition slot at the Bad Seed callboard outside Room 171.

If you have any questions, please contact us by email:

ezrasimon14@gmail.com
adam_brown@newton.k12.ma.us
INFORMATION

Please sign up for one audition slot on the callboard outside Room 171 and pick up a script.

You are required to read Bad Seed prior to your audition. Please fill out this packet and give it to a stage manager at your audition.

Please prepare and memorize one of the monologues of your gender in this packet, and do the same for an additional monologue that is not from Bad Seed. Please have the second monologue you choose contrast with your choice from the packet. This means that it should highlight different emotions, intentions, and styles that show your acting range. In other words: if one monologue is dramatic, the other should be comedic. You will be asked to present both monologues.

If you need any help finding a monologue, please ask or email Mr. Brown or us for help – we will be glad to provide it. If you would like to work on your audition, feel free to contact Mr. Brown or another student director.

dreesekelly2013@gmail.com, julietkelseyapplication@gmail.com

We are looking for actors with strong fundamentals (vocal energy, movement with purpose, etc.), honesty, and intention. Honesty means that you should be a believable character. We should see the truth in the things that you do. We should believe what you are saying and doing. Intention means that everything you do on the stage is done for a reason – your character wants something, and you need to get it. Make strong choices and don’t back down from what you do.

NOTE: Please perform your Bad Seed monologue in your best Southern drawl. This will not affect casting, and we recognize that nobody will have a finished accent. During the process, we’ll work with an accent coach – we just want to get a baseline.

Accent examples: http://www.dialectsarchive.com/georgia-2 (Male), http://www.dialectsarchive.com/alabama-10 (Female)
SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE

*Bad Seed* opens in the apartment of Colonel Kenneth Penmark and his wife Christine Penmark. Kenneth is preparing to leave for Washington, D.C. and the Pentagon for his work. He says his goodbyes to Christine and their daughter Rhoda, a prim, ‘perfect’ little lady of eight. Just before he leaves, landlords Monica Breedlove and Emory Wages (siblings) arrive to say goodbye. Kenneth departs, leaving Monica to dote on Rhoda. She constantly gives Rhoda presents and compliments. Workman Leroy enters from outside and purposely spills water on Rhoda’s shoes. Monica threatens his job, and Leroy reluctantly apologizes. Rhoda’s schoolteacher, Miss Fern, comes by to take Rhoda to the school’s picnic. She and Christine discuss Rhoda’s impeccable school record – and distance from her peers.

Later that day, Christine is hosting a lunch party for Monica, Emory, and their amateur criminologist friend Reginald Tasker. They talk about Freudian psychology and gender roles, eventually progressing to murders and crime. Tasker mentions Bessie Denker, a brilliant and uncatchable murderess. Christine confides her lifelong recurring dream that her parents are not her real parents. Emory turns on the radio, only to find a news story about Rhoda’s picnic: Claude Daigle, one of Rhoda’s classmates, has drowned. Claude was he who bested Rhoda in the school’s penmanship competition, and received a medal for his victory. Rhoda suddenly enters, appearing unfazed. Christine worries about her mental well-being, but Rhoda only asks for lunch and her roller skates. Though confused, Christine obliges.

That night, Christine reads Rhoda the story of a wandering knight. She receives a call from her father, Richard Bravo, a radio host and author during World War II. He plans to visit them soon. Christine starts to write a letter to Kenneth, but stops. She tears it up.
A few days later, Miss Fern pays Christine a visit and questions Christine about Rhoda. Rhoda was the last person to see Claude Daigle alive. Though Miss Fern refuses to indict Rhoda, she implies her involvement and reveals that Rhoda will not be invited back to the Fern school. The Daigles appear, Mrs. Daigle very drunk and Mr. Daigle attempting to restrain her. Mrs. Daigle tells Christine that Claude’s penmanship medal is missing. After the Daigles leave, Christine finds the medal in Rhoda’s drawer. She confronts Rhoda, who denies everything. Christine breaks down, and hugs Rhoda as the latter smiles out at the audience.

**ACT TWO**

The next day, Monica comes by and discusses Rhoda’s dismissal from the Fern School. Rhoda opens a package from Kenneth – a new puzzle, packed with excelsior. Monica runs up to check on dinner for her and Rhoda, and Leroy confronts Rhoda alone. He accuses her of killing Claude Daigle. She denies every word. Tasker arrives for cocktails, and Christine questions him indirectly about Rhoda and the possibility of her crime. Richard Bravo arrives, and he and Tasker debate about Bessie Denker and how she never ‘learned’ to commit crimes. Tasker calls her a ‘bad seed’ – a human without compassion or pity or morals. She could no more be taught to love than a blind person could be taught to see. Tasker leaves, and Christine questions her father about her recurring dream. Under pressure, he admits that she was found at the house of Bessie Denker after she fled the country. Bravo did not think the moral vacancy could be inherited, but now becomes wary of Rhoda. Rhoda tries to sneak past Christine with her shoes (which she used to beat Claude Daigle). Christine forces Rhoda to tell her the story. Rhoda admits to killing Claude and an elderly neighbor from their old home. Christine tells Rhoda to burn her shoes, and promises not to tell Miss Fern.
Leroy and Rhoda meet again. He tells her he knows of her murder and has taken the shoes she tried to burn. Rhoda demands them back, but is interrupted by Christine. Rhoda goes outside to an ice cream truck, stealing matches on her way out. Mrs. Daigle arrives once more, still drunk. She talks to Rhoda about Claude, subtly threatening her. Monica takes Rhoda ‘out shopping,’ really trying to get her away from Mrs. Daigle. Mr. Daigle takes his wife home, and Monica reappears, having let Rhoda get another ice cream. Suddenly, the garage bursts into flames. Rhoda has set fire to Leroy’s makeshift bed of excelsior. Offstage, a flaming Leroy tries to run to the pond, but collapses before he can get there. Rhoda has locked herself in the den, and plays “Au Claire de la Lune.” Christine nearly goes mad, and Monica takes Rhoda upstairs to protect her.

That night, Christine has calmed down. She gives Rhoda some new vitamins – sleeping pills. She puts twelve pills in Rhoda’s hand and Rhoda takes them. Christine vows not to let Rhoda be locked up, either in an asylum or prison. She puts Rhoda to bed, and gets a key from a drawer. She leaves. A gunshot is heard.

Days later, Kenneth has returned and is hosting a memorial lunch with Tasker, Monica, and Emory. They discuss Christine’s death and the death of her father at the hands of a heart attack. We discover that Rhoda was saved after the gunshot was heard. Rhoda appears, and hugs Kenneth as she smiles out at the audience.
CHARACTERS

Christine Penmark (F-30) “Then the knight alit from his steed and sought what way he could find out of this labyrinth.”

Loving wife to Kenneth and mother to Rhoda, Christine is “given meaning by the affection she gives and receives.” She is deeply devoted to her family. The play centers on her discovery of her daughter Rhoda’s condition, and her gradual abandonment by her friends and family. She is driven by both a fear and a hunger for the truth, which are put in direct opposition upon the revelation of who Rhoda is. She struggles to cope with her unraveling life, and decides ultimately to end it.

Rhoda Penmark (F-8) “You think she was one of these poor deformed children, born without pity?”

Rhoda is a ‘bad seed.’ The granddaughter of “the most amazing woman in all the annals of homicide,” Bessie Denker, she was born without a capacity for moral judgment. Though outwardly perfect, she is morally blind, and a master of manipulation. She kills Claude Daigle for his penmanship medal, and burns Leroy to death in retaliation for his threats. She forces the audience to question the definition of humanity.

Col. Kenneth Penmark (M-35) “It’s just another empty month or two. We’ll get through them somehow.”

Kenneth is Christine’s devoted husband. His job at the Pentagon requires him to be away for the greater part of the play. He is, without realizing it, the first in a long line to abandon Christine. His absence sets Christine adrift. Upon her death, Kenneth is devastated, saying that “the earth is empty, and I’m empty.” Kenneth, by the end, represents and amplifies the societal ignorance of Rhoda’s condition. He is ironically comforted by his deranged daughter at the close.
**Leroy (M-35)** “That’s a smart little girl. She’s almost as smart as I am. She sees through me and I see through her. By damn she’s smart.”

Leroy is the janitor and workman for the apartment building. He is, in the beginning, the only character to see through Rhoda’s charade. He is cryptic and quiet, only coming alive when confronting Rhoda with her misdeeds. He finds a sadistic pleasure in torturing Rhoda with his knowledge of her crimes, and pays the ultimate price for his game. Leroy acts as a counter to Rhoda in action, but is strikingly comparable in his ability to manipulate. He makes the audience question whom they are rooting for.

**Monica Breedlove (F-45)** “Freud…just bristled when I suggested that women had more sense than men.”

Monica is the Penmarks’ “effusive [neighbor] from upstairs.” The landlord of the apartment complex, she genuinely cares about the Penmarks and adores Rhoda. She never sees through Rhoda’s mask, and is one of the last to abandon Christine after the latter condemns Rhoda. She has a love of psychology, and diagnoses (often incorrectly) everyone she comes across. She is very witty and believes in feminine independence. She is a subtler interpretation of the comic relief.

**Emory Wages (M-52)** “I can stand anything except…your analysis…I don’t want to look into the bottom of my soul.”

Monica’s taciturn older brother, Emory is good-natured and easygoing, always willing to chat or eat with friends. He is also the first responder to the garage fire, and comforts Kenneth after Christine’s death. His refusal to leave Monica after she is widowed provides an antiparallel to Christine’s tale of abandonment. He shows a love for his family and friends, and tries to get along with others.
Reginald Tasker (M-45) “Nothing would hurt Reggie. He thrives on buckets of blood and sudden deaths.”

Reginald Tasker is Monica’s and Christine’s friend. He is a mystery writer and an amateur criminologist. He is interested in the works of Christine’s father, Richard Bravo, and admires him greatly. He is the first to mention Bessie Denker and her incapacity for love. He also gives the play its title – his concept of the ‘bad seed’ defines the plot and themes of the play.

Miss Claudia Fern (F-65) “The more I see, the less I’m able to understand the tight little minds of people like the Fern girls.”

Miss Fern is one of the heads of the Fern School, which Rhoda attends. She is kind and unwilling to condemn Rhoda. She does not invite Rhoda back to the school, but clearly cares about Christine and is only forced to abandon her because of the actions of her daughter. In our production, she will be present in 2.4 as Kenneth mourns Christine.

Mrs. Hortense Daigle (F-40) “I’m a little drunk. I guess you never get a little drunk.”

Mrs. Daigle is only seen after the death of her son Claude. She is mad with grief and drowns her sorrow in liquor. Though never obtaining proof, she suspects Rhoda of having a hand in her son’s death, and refuses to leave Christine alone. Though perhaps defined as an antagonist in her actions against Christine, her motives are justified in her defense of her late son.

Richard Bravo (M-65) “It cannot be inherited. It cannot.”

Richard Bravo is Christine’s adopted father. She discovers this midway through the play, when he admits he found her at the abandoned home of Bessie Denker. He refuses to believe that the ‘bad seed’ gene can be passed on, but becomes afraid of Rhoda. He eventually suffers a heart attack upon hearing the news of Christine’s suicide. In our production, he will be double-cast with Mr. Daigle, the embarrassed husband of Mrs. Daigle.
LEROY: I just remembered something. Just the morning of the picnic I wiped off your shoes with the cleats on ‘em. You used to go tap-tap-tap on the walk. How come you don’t wear ‘em any more? [Silence] You know one thing? You didn’t hit that boy with no stick. You hit him with them shoes. Ain’t I right this time? Now you may say you burned those shoes. I don’t say that wasn’t smart. That was. Only suppose I heard something coming rattling down the incinerator, and I says to myself, “It sounds to me like a pair of shoes with cleats.” Oh, I’m not saying you didn’t burn ‘em a little, but you didn’t burn all of ‘em up like you wanted to. Now listen to this and figure out which of us is the silly one. I’m in the basement working, and I hear them shoes come rattling down the pipe. I open the door quick, and there they is on top of the coals only smoking the least little bit. I grab them out. Oh, they scorched some, but there’s plenty left to turn blue and show where the blood was. There’s plenty left to put you in the electric chair!
TASKER: Bessie Denker – the most amazing woman in all the annals of homicide. She was doomed – doomed to commit murder after murder till somehow or other she was found out. She’d been better off if she’d died young. And society would. And yet sometimes I wonder whether these malignant brutes may not be the mutation that survives on this planet in this age. This age of technology and murder-for-empire. Maybe the softies will have to go, and the snake-hearted will inherit the Earth. Now, I’m betting on the democracies. But we’re living in an age of murder. In all history, there have never been so many people murdered as in our century. Add up all the murders from the beginning of history to 1900, and then add the murders after 1900, and our century wins. All alone — [Silence] And on that merry note, I think I should take my leave, for I meant not to bother you and I’ve been lecturing.
CHRISTINE: You found me somewhere. I know the place. I either remember it or I dreamed it. I dream of a bedroom in a farmhouse in a countryside where there were orchards. I share the room with my brother, who is older than I – and my – is it my mother? — comes to take care of him. She is a graceful, lovely woman, like an angel. I suppose my brother must have died, for afterward I’m alone in the room. One night I awake feeling terrified and for some reason I can’t stay in that house. It is midnight and I somehow get out the window, drop to the grass below and hide myself in the tall weeds beyond the first orchard. I don’t recall much more except that toward morning I’m thirsty and keep eating the yellow pippins that fall from the tree – and when the first light comes up on the clouds I can hear my mother some distance away calling my name. I hide in the weeds and don’t answer because I’m afraid. Is this a dream? Is it only a dream?
MRS. DAIGLE: There’s something funny about the whole thing, Christine. I heard that your little girl was the last one who saw him alive. Will you ask her about the last few minutes and tell me what she says? [Silence] Somebody took the medal off his shirt, Christine. It couldn’t come off by accident. I pinned it on myself, and it had a clasp that locks in place. It was no accident. You can wear such simple things, can’t you? I never could wear simple things. I couldn’t even buy ‘em. When I got ‘em home, they didn’t look simple. —He was such a lovely, dear little boy. He said I was his sweetheart. He said he was going to marry me when he grew up. I used to laugh and say, “You’ll forget me long before then. You’ll find a prettier girl, and you’ll marry her.” And you know what he said then? He said, “No, I won’t, because there’s not a prettier girl in the world than you are.” If you don’t believe me, ask the girl who comes in and cleans. She was present at the time.
YOUR INFO

Please print all information legibly and submit to the Stage Manager before your audition.

NAME:_________________________D.O.B:________

ADDRESS:________________________________________

HOME #:_________________CELL#:_________________
EMAIL:__________________________________________

PARENT(S) NAME: ____________________________

PARENT CELL PHONE #:_________________________

PARENT(S) EMAILS:________________________________

Are you willing to accept all roles? Y___ N___

If not, please list the roles you will NOT accept and why.

______________________________________________

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Please list theatrical experience (You may attach a résumé if you have one)
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Are you willing to cut/dye your hair? Y___ N___
Are you comfortable kissing onstage? Y___ N___
Why do you want to be a part of Bad Seed?
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
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If not cast are you interested in working backstage on this production? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, what positions are you interested in? Asst. Stage Manager____ Costumes____ Props_____
Stage Crew_____ Marketing_____ StuProd_____ Other (Please specify)_________________
CONFLICTS

Please note that conflicts will weigh heavily in the casting process. We are looking for actors who are available for most rehearsals in the afternoons. Rehearsals will not go past 6:30 until Tech and Production Weeks. NOTE: No conflicts will be accepted after December 2.

Weekly Conflicts: Please list ALL weekly conflicts below from 2:30PM to 11PM between September 27 and December 17. (This includes X-Block commitments)

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Specific One-Time Conflicts: If you know of a date or dates between September 27 to December 17 during which you will be absent (i.e. vacations, appointments, etc.), please list them below.

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THEATRE INK CASTING POLICY

Both student and staff Directors always strive to cast fairly, with the guiding objective of assembling the overall cast that will best serve the directorial vision for the show. This requires many hours of careful analysis by the Directors and Mr. Brown, who take their responsibility in this area very seriously. Mr. Brown watches every audition and participates as a mediator and guide through every casting process.

Theatre Ink casting decisions are not based on seniority (grade level in school), or years of participation in the program. This is a firm programmatic value arrived at after years of assembling casts, and seeing the exciting results that come from having students collaborate across the grade spectrum from freshman to senior, each cast solely on his or her fit for a given role as revealed through a rigorous and thoughtful audition process.

Auditioning for a show can be competitive and sometimes daunting. In keeping with the program’s emphasis on theatre as a vehicle for learning and individual development, Mr. Brown is available to coach and support students as they seek to improve their speaking, presentation, and performance skills through the audition process.

DIVERSITY

Theatre Ink values and celebrates diversity of all kinds. Encouraging diversity of participation is an overall goal of the program. Theatre Ink actively encourages all students to participate in productions as members of cast or crew. All students who audition are considered equally in an inclusive environment and in accordance with Theatre Ink casting principles. Theatre Ink hopes to be a reflection not only of the varied backgrounds and experiences of Newton North’s staff and students but also of diverse world cultures, life experiences, and theatrical traditions. By carefully selecting a range of different shows each year we strive to tell theatrical stories that represent the richness of our world while offering a wide range of opportunities for all students.

On Casting

Casting is a very complex process. In the end, the Directors must choose the students who best fit the roles in many dimensions, both by the individual skills they present in audition, but also in the dynamics that develop between actors who will be creating the driving energy of the show in scenes together. Such dynamics are a large part of what is explored in the “Callback” round of auditions. For students, auditioning is an exciting, yet difficult, process that can bring about greater success, whether cast in the production or not. The more a student auditions, the better they will become, especially if they seek and receive feedback and guidance. The feeling of “rejection” over not getting cast seems disappointing at first, but we strongly urge you to encourage your child to get right back to work as soon as possible so they can sharpen their skills for a future audition. In theatre, as in life, all of us experience both disappointment and success. Our goal is to teach our students how to deal with both, so when they leave Newton North High School they will be well prepared to navigate their way toward success in a complex world.
To Parents:

Due to the large audition pool Theatre Ink shows typically experience, your child’s audition does not guarantee him or her a role in the show. If your child is not cast (and also if he or she is cast), we strongly suggest that (s) he meet with the Directors and/or Mr. Brown to obtain valuable feedback while it is freshly in mind, in order to further develop skills for future auditions.

While disappointment for some is an inevitable part of the experience in any competitive tryout situation, be it an academic, athletic or artistic pursuit, one of the hallmarks of Theatre Ink is that there are many other ways to get involved working on the production if you are not cast in an on-stage role. These include technical crew (set design and construction, lights, sound) working with Mr. Barrington-Haber, Theatre Ink’s Technical Director; or on the many other teams, such as props, costumes, publicity and makeup. There are also opportunities to be a student producer or stage manager, which you can discuss with Mr. Brown or the Directors. If slots of interest are not available in the current show, please consider looking into such opportunities in an upcoming show. The wide range of types of shows, and the large number (11-12 per year) is designed to make as many theatre arts opportunities available to as many students as is feasible within the resources provided by the Newton Public Schools. We also strongly encourage each student to take a Theatre Arts and Speech class -- offered as an elective to all grade levels -- and go to Improv Club during X-blocks. These theatre education experiences will further enhance your child’s skills in these areas and give them more confidence for the audition process. On- and off-stage participants equally share the wonderful spirit of camaraderie and collaboration that develops during shows. Talking to students who have worked in various roles and jobs will confirm this for your student. Keep an open mind, and seek out a new experience!

GET INVOLVED!

If you and/or your child are not satisfied with the casting decision and wish to inquire as to the reasons for it, the first step is for the student to meet with the show’s Directors. If further discussion is desired, the student should then meet with Mr. Brown. If, after those meetings, you and/or your child do not feel you received valuable feedback or information you are satisfied with, you are then encouraged to make a joint parent/student appointment with Mr. Brown. Please be assured that a student’s future participation in Theatre Ink will not be jeopardized in any way by seeking to have concerns addressed according to this established process.

Student signature________________________________________

Date____________________

Parent signature________________________________________

Date___________________
**Theatre Ink Production Agreement (Please read and fill out the following Theatre Ink Agreement)**

I, ____________________________, agree to the following terms in this agreement and promise to abide by the conditions and expectations set forth by my director, choreographers, music director, technical director, producer and fellow cast and crew members. I will dedicate myself as a true team member to this production process in order to present a show that we as a cast, crew and production team will be proud of.

1. **All actors, technical stage crewmembers and musicians should have fun working on this production as collaborative artists.** We expect a positive attitude, open communication, and ownership from beginning to end.

2. **All actors, technical stage crewmembers and musicians must be in good academic standing to participate in and remain in this production.** All actors, technical stage crewmembers and musicians are expected to be in school during the day in order to participate in rehearsals and performances after-school. It is also required that a progress report be completely filled out every two weeks and returned to Mr. Brown via your stage manager. You will not be allowed to attend rehearsal if this is not turned in on time.

3. **All participants must be passing a minimum of 20 credits each marking period or they will be removed from the process when the report card is issued.** N’s in a class do not count as passing.

4. **All actors, technical stage crewmembers and musicians must be on time to all scheduled rehearsals and technical crew duties.**

   *If late for three rehearsals you may be cut from the production.*

5. **All actors, technical stage crewmembers and musicians must be present at all scheduled rehearsals.** Rehearsals will generally be Monday through Friday from 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Some weekend rehearsals may be requested in advance.

   *If you have three unexcused absences from rehearsal may be cut from the production.*

**Please Note:**

*In order to be excused you must have a legitimate note as to why. A valid excuse could be an illness, death in the family, etc. It is also important to turn in all notes to the director, and notify them directly in advance if you cannot make any rehearsal. In case of emergency, you must call 617-559-6306 and leave a message. Communication is the key to good relationships during a production.*

6. **All actors, technical stage crewmembers and musicians will keep the rehearsal spaces, stage, dressing rooms and costume room clean throughout the rehearsal and performance process.**

   *There will be no food or drink allowed on the stage at anytime. Water Only!*
7. All actors, technical stage crewmembers and musicians are responsible for their props and costumes. If props or costumes are damaged or lost while in your possession, you are responsible for the replacement cost.

8. All actors, technical stage crewmembers and musicians will use the rehearsal process productively. Actors who are waiting to work on stage should be memorizing lines, reviewing blocking, dances, music, or reading materials related to the production.

*Remember: you are a student first, so you must stay current with your class assignments. We strongly encourage you to do homework at rehearsal if there is time.*

*Please bring snacks and water in case you are hungry.*

9. All actors, technical stage crewmembers and musicians must stay in the rehearsal area during a rehearsal unless given permission to leave. Your presence may be called upon at anytime while you are at rehearsal.

10. All actors, technical stage crew and musicians must be supportive of each other's roles in this production. It is important to communicate with one another in a respectful manner. Whether on stage or offstage, all roles in this production are equally important.

11. All actors will complete 8 technical theatre shop/stage crew hours during the rehearsal process. This may include painting, set construction, lighting, costumes, props, or other related areas as designated by the technical director or producer.

12. All actors, technical stage crew members and musicians are required to take part in a full stage strike directed by the technical director, Michael Barrington-Haber, on the Monday and Tuesday (if necessary), after the production. All cast and crew will remain until the strike is complete and the stage, costume room, dressing rooms, music rooms and shop is cleared and cleaned. Any cast, crew member or musician who misses strike will not be allowed to work on the next show unless they put in the hours they missed with the technical director.

*The spirit of this agreement is to ensure that all actors, technical stage crewmembers and musicians are treated fairly as creative, collaborative artists who are working towards the same goal. Mr. Adam Brown, Director of Theatre Ink; Mr. Michael Barrington-Haber, Technical Director, and your Directors will enforce this agreement to the best of their ability in the spirit of a high quality theatrical production process.*

Actor/crew/musician signature ______________________

Date____________

Parent Signature ____________________________________

Date____________