First Grade News

November 2, 2015

Dear Parents,
We hope that you had a wonderful weekend with your children. Please be reminded that there is **no school tomorrow, Tuesday, November 3** due to Election Day.

Word Work:
Tonight's Homework: There will be no new word wall words this week. Please review all 20 words that have been introduced so far this year. We will be giving a review test on Friday including 10 of the words. Here are the introduced words: and, am, be, because, favorite, he, his, her, has, I, it, is, like, me, she, the, to, this, we, went.

Reading:
On most Tuesdays, your child will bring home a Ziploc bag with a book in it. Have your child share these books with you at home. You will also find a Parent Comment Book that you may use to write comments or questions about your child's reading. Please remember that we will do our best to write back, but it won't come home to you until the following Tuesday. You do not have to write in the journal every week BUT **please remember to send the bag (with all of its contents) back with your child the very next day unless noted!**

Writing
We just finished our Launching unit in Writing Workshop. Each student picked one story that they felt represented their best story. They went back into the story to revise it so that was even better than the original. All classes had a special Writing celebration last week with the Second graders to celebrate our first published stories!

Math
We have begun a new unit in Math called Fact Strategies within 20. This unit begins with the story of a double-decker bus – a bus that has two decks with ten seats on each. Five seats on each deck are red and five seats are white. The bus goes by quickly and the little girl in the story, sitting at her bedroom window and watching, works out ways to use the colors of the seats to calculate quickly how many people are on the bus. Her father drives a double-decker bus and she helps him figure out a way to know how many empty seats there are on the top deck even though he can't see them. The unit continues to focus on using the math rack as a powerful model and tool to act out the story. Here's a link to a math rack app that we sometimes use in the classroom: http://www.mathlearningcenter.org/web-apps/number-rack/
The mathematical focus of this unit is early number sense. The Math rack encourages the automatizing of the basic facts by focusing on relationships and the use of strategies such as doubles and near doubles (8+7 = (7+7)+1) and making tens (9+7 = 10+6).

Here are some of the strategies that you child will continue to use in this unit:

***Counting on and counting back**
A major landmark strategy to notice and celebrate is when a child begins to count on- labeling the first set 8, moving it to the side as a group, and then continuing with 9, 10, and on to 17. It is developing an understanding of the relationships of the parts and the whole that causes the shifts in the strategies. For subtraction, children also become able to count back until they reach the target amount, knowing that these amounts together make the whole.

***Using doubles and near doubles**
A great way to help children automatize the basic addition and subtraction facts is to work on relationships. For example, by itself 7 +6 can be a difficult fact to learn but when it is explored in relation to a double such as 7 + 7 or 6 + 6 it is easier. Once the doubles are known, they can be used for many other problems: 5+7=6+6,
7+3 =5+5, and 7+6=6+6+1 (or 7+7-1).

***Making ten**
Using the combinations of whole numbers that add up to ten is a powerful strategy that makes learning most of the more difficult basic facts easier. If children know that 8+2 is equivalent to 10, then it is quite easy for them to solve for 8+7. They simply take 2 from the 7 and give it to the 8. This produces 10+5.

***Using the five- and ten-structures**
One of the most important ways of structuring number is to compose and decompose amounts into groups of five and ten. For example, seeing 8 as 5+3, or 7 as 5+2, is very helpful in automatizing the basic fact "8+7." Since 3+2 also equals 5, 8+7 is equivalent to 3 fives. The five-structure is also helpful in automatizing all the combinations that make ten – if 6 is equivalent to 5+1, then only 4 more are needed to make 2 fives, which equal 10. Similarly, it can be helpful to think of 7+8 as 3 fives, or 9+7 as 10+6.

Respectfully yours,

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