LETTER HOME

Parts and Wholes

Dear Family Member:

The activities in this unit will help your child better understand fractions. Your child will explore the concept of a whole. He or she will also learn the meaning of the numerator and the denominator and how to use them to name fractions. Understanding the size of the whole is important to understanding the fractional parts of that whole. For example, half of a soccer field is larger than half of a sheet of paper. On the other hand, it is also necessary to understand that the parts of one whole must be equal. That is, one-fourth is not just one of any four parts; it is one of four equal parts.

Another important idea is related to the relative size of the fraction piece. The fewer pieces a whole is divided into, the larger each piece will be. Your child will use concrete models to name fractions, compare the size of fractions, and find equivalent fractions.

What fraction of the students are wearing glasses?

You can help your child with fractions using the following ideas:

Fraction Spotting. Point out fractions in your daily life; for example, one-half of a bottle of soda pop. Discuss what the whole is and what the fraction means. If the whole is 2 liters of soda in the bottle, then $\frac{1}{2}$ of the bottle is 1 liter of soda.

Doubling and Halving Recipes. Use recipes that require fractional amounts, such as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar or $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt. If you halve or double a recipe, help your child determine what the final amounts will be.

Play Fraction Hex. In this game players compare fractions in order to move game pieces across a gameboard. Directions and game boards are in the *Student Activity Book* in Lesson 6.

Math Facts and Mental Math

This unit continues the systematic review and assessment of the multiplication facts.

Multiplication Facts. Students review the 2s and 3s, increase fluency and learn to apply multiplication strategies to larger numbers.

You can help your child review these facts using the flash cards that are sent home or by making a set of flash cards from index cards or scrap paper. Study facts in small groups each night. As your child goes through the flash cards, put the cards in three stacks: Facts I Know Quickly, Facts I Can Figure Out, and Facts I Need to Learn.

For Facts I Need to Learn, work on strategies for figuring them out. Good strategies include:

Skip counting. To solve 2×8, skip count: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16

Doubling. To solve 2×8, think $8 + 8 = 16$

Reasoning from known facts. To solve, 9×3 , $9 \times 2 = 18$ and $18 + 3 = 21$

For Facts I Can Figure Out, use the flash cards to practice the facts for fluency.
For Facts I Know Quickly, help your child use mental math strategies to multiply 10s and 100s:
$20 \times 30 = 600$, $40 \times 300 = 12000$, $3 \times 300 = 900$

Thank you for taking time to talk with your child about what he or she is doing in math.

Sincerely,