

October 3, 2011

Dear Parents,



The second graders are spending time daily practicing addition and subtraction math facts. We are using a program called *Mastering Math Fact Families*, and we are calling it *Track Math*. The first grade teachers used it last year, so you might be familiar with the program. It will take only a few minutes each day of class time, but students will keep working until they have mastered all the facts. A fact is mastered when it can be answered instantly, without any pause. *Track Math* is unique because it teaches only 2 facts and their inverse operations in families on each page. The program allows each child to go at his or her own pace, taking as many days to master those facts as needed. In this way, students are only competing with themselves. Students are given an opportunity daily to show they have learned a set of facts by passing its test. Once students "pass" a set of facts, they color in the number for that set on their "Track Chart."

You can help your child progress and learn faster by practicing at home the same set of facts your child is learning at school. Any day your child does not pass a set of facts, he or she will have that day's practice sheet to bring home as homework. It will help a great deal if you will practice with your child at home for just five minutes with that sheet.

Here's how we recommend you practice *Track Math* at home:

Your child should have the top half of the day's practice sheet (without answers written in) in front of himself or herself. Work only on the top half of the sheet.

Have your child read each fact aloud and then say the answers to you. If you hear either the slightest hesitation or an error on one of those facts, give your child some extra practice on that fact. The best way to give extra practice is to begin by immediately giving your child the correct answer, and then ask him or her to repeat the problem and the answer once more. Next, back up to the beginning of that line, and have your child begin again. If there is no hesitation or mistake when the problem is reached this time, be sure to praise your child and let him or her continue.

Work until finishing the top half of the page, but no more than five minutes in one session. If you wish to do a second session, wait at least an hour, or try it again in the morning. When memorizing facts, two short sessions, hours apart, are far more helpful than one long session.

Your child's hard work should pay off in "passing" within a very few days. Then the next set will be assigned and practice can begin again. Each practice and test sheet is cumulative, including all the facts learned so far.



Learning all the facts in a given operation is a lot of work, but future success in math is dependent upon knowing facts so well that the answers come automatically without much thinking. Especially in a world of calculators, being able to compute math facts mentally is needed just to know if the calculator answer is correct. You can also help by sharing with your child the importance of learning math facts.

Thank you so much for your support of this critical learning goal. I will keep you notified of your child's success in this important task.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Davis