

PARENT LETTER

Dear Parent,

Your child is beginning a new unit created at the Battle Creek Area Mathematics and Science Center. This unit was designed to promote inquiry-based science and is complete with materials to accompany the activities. During the next twelve to thirteen weeks, your child will be actively involved with the *Weather and Climate* unit. This unit is geared for kindergarten students and focuses on the "Big Idea" that weather changes with the seasons and weather information can be observed and collected with the use of weather instruments. The unit emphasizes the following enduring understandings of science content:

1. Weather is described in terms of temperature, cloud cover, wind, and precipitation.
2. Weather data collection tools are used to record temperature, precipitation, wind speed, and direction.
3. Weather changes with the seasons.
4. Safety precautions should be followed during severe weather events.

During this unit of study, your child will learn to record air temperature using a thermometer in Celsius and Fahrenheit scales, observe wind speed and direction using a windsock and flag, and measure precipitation in centimeters using a rain gauge. This would be a good time to take an active look at the local weather forecasts with your child and discuss the information that the meteorologist gives during the broadcast.

Your child will also be learning about the seasons in your state and the weather related to each season. Severe weather and appropriate precautions during severe weather are also addressed in this unit. Discuss with your child the safest place in the house during a thunderstorm and tornado. Practice safety measures in your own home.

Your child will be actively participating in scientific inquiry and reasoning by observing, questioning, investigating, recording, and developing solutions to problems. The students will become more skilled at analyzing and communicating their findings about the weather and seasons.

During our study of the wind your child will be making a windsock. If you have scraps of fabric or ribbon please send them with your child to add to the windsock-making supply table.

Suggestions for activities to do at home are included in this letter. These activities will reinforce the concepts taught during this unit of instruction.

We hope you enjoy discussing the concepts involved in *Weather and Climate* with your child. Let us know if we may be of assistance.

The Outreach Staff

Battle Creek Area Mathematics and Science Center

(269) 213-3904 or (269) 213-3905

ACTIVITIES TO DO AT HOME

Activities To Do At Home

1. Weather Walks:

Go for a wind walk! While you and your child are standing very still with your eyes closed, feel the wind on your face and hands. What do you hear? What do you feel? Open your eyes and watch the trees sway while you listen very carefully. What do you hear? Go to the library to check out *Gilberto and the Wind* by Marie Hall Ets. Have your child tell you what windy words are included in the story.

Go for a snow walk! While you and your child are standing very still with your eyes closed, let the snow touch your face and hands. What do you feel? Do you hear anything? Open your eyes and watch the snowflakes. Do all the snowflakes come straight down, or do they come down in different directions? Be a snow detective with your child. Find some prints or marks in the snow and try to decide who or what made them. You might check out a book from the library to verify your decisions. (While you're there, check out the book *The Snowy Day*, by Ezra Jack Keats, to read together.) Figure out what type of snow is best for packing. When the packing is good, build a snow castle.

Go for a rain walk! While you and your child are standing very still with your eyes closed, feel the rain on your face and hands. What do you feel? Do the raindrops come straight down, or are they slanted? Do the raindrops bounce when they hit something? What happens when the raindrops hit a puddle? Find a spot where the water is moving similar to that of a river. Float a leaf or twig on the moving water and watch where it goes.

Go for a sun walk! While you and your child are standing outside, facing the sun, close your eyes. (Be sure to discuss with your child why we do not look directly at the sun.) What do you feel? Do you feel the air around you? Do you hear anything? Lie on the grass and watch the clouds. Where are they going and why? Do they change shape as the wind blows them along? What imaginary pictures can you depict the clouds as forming? Have fun making shadows with your child. Experiment to make tall, short, skinny, and fat shadows. Make your shadow go behind you. Make your shadow go in front of you. How can this be done? Can you make your shadow disappear?

2. Make a Seasons book: Look through newspapers, magazines and catalogs for seasonal pictures with your child.
3. Play a Weather Association Game: Say a word related to the weather. Have your child suggest another word that comes to their mind when they hear the word you said. (Example: You say *rain*; your child may say *wet, umbrella, raincoat, puddles, thunder, clouds...*)
4. Weather Charts: Have your child use weather symbols to record the weather each day. Keep a daily chart or use a calendar to record the symbols. After several weeks, have them count the number of rainy, sunny, cloudy, and windy days by counting each kind of symbol.
5. Help your child recognize the signs of the seasons. Observe the plants and animals around your home, as well as weather patterns and the length of day. Have your child describe your observations.
6. Take your child to the library or book store to find magazines and books about weather and seasons.

Oh Say Can You Say What's the Weather Today: All About Weather by Tish Rabe & Aristides Ruiz

What Will the Weather Be? by Lynda DeWitt & Carolyn Croll

Weather Words and What They Mean by Gail Gibbons

Clouds by Anne Rockwell & Frane Lessac

Wild Weather Soup by Caroline Formby

Weather Forecasting by Gail Gibbons