

Paper #1: What will my child be learning?

Dear parents/caregivers,

I am very pleased to be teaching first grade and to have your child in my class. This year in math class we will be covering basic math concepts, and I am happy to explain them to you.

Your child will learn the numbers up to 100 and how to count objects up to 100. S/he will also learn how to count by twos, fives, and tens up to 100 and backward by ones from 30, and s/he will learn the meaning of the equals sign (=). Your child will learn how to add two numbers that equal 18 or less and then also learn how to subtract them. Then s/he will make up story problems that use those addition or subtraction facts, e.g. "John has two apples and I give him three apples. How many apples does he have now?" S/he will learn about fractions and how halves, thirds, and fourths make up a whole. S/he will learn how to tell which number is biggest if s/he is shown several numbers together.

Your child will learn about money and how much pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters are worth, and s/he will be able to combine them to make one dollar. S/he will learn about telling time, about measuring volume and weight, and about the calendar. S/he will also learn about measurements for temperature, number of people, etc. and how to show those measurements on a graph, and s/he will be able to tell which information is bigger than other information (e.g., there are more boys than girls in the class). S/he will also learn about patterns, shapes, and sorting objects by color, size, etc.

I think that understanding the concept of greater than, less than, more, fewer, etc. may be a hard concept to grasp. Also, learning the different values of money may be hard for first graders to understand at first. However, we will work together to make sure that everyone understands the ideas. On the concept of "greater than" and "less than", I will work with the class in a variety of settings and ways to show the idea. For example, I will line up the students by a characteristic like gender and then talk with them about how many more children are boys than girls and how many fewer children are girls than boys, or vice versa. The students will also work with greater than, less than, more, and fewer using

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concrete objects such as balls, blocks, or other small toys that they can move around to explore the concept. As a class, we will use technology such as the SMARTBoard, educational videos, and computer games to further practice this idea.

In studying coins and money, I will work with the class by first presenting each coin and its value and then explaining how they equal one another; this will complement the lesson on the equals sign (=). One way that we will discuss the idea of the value of money is an activity each morning in which we will add a penny to our class's pile of money. When we reach five pennies, we will exchange them for a nickel; two nickels, a dime; two dimes and a nickel, a quarter; and so on. The class will also experience a classroom "store" in which each child will "sell" something that he or she has to offer, and the students will have to "buy" it with pretend money and make change for one another. The students will also work on understanding the value of coins in small group activities and individually with computer games, SMARTBoard activities, and during playtime.

I encourage you to work with your child to practice these concepts, and everything s/he learns at school, at home and to show him their usage in everyday life.

I look forward to partnering with you this year to teach your child! Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Rachael Sloan