

Dear Families,

Our class is beginning the Science Companion® Rocks Unit. The Rocks Unit guides children through a hands-on exploration of rocks and geology and encourages them to build on their natural sense of wonder and curiosity about the world around them. As children collect, observe, describe, and experiment with rocks, minerals, and fossils, they hone their observation skills, as well as begin to unravel the puzzle of what rocks are and how they are formed.

During the Rocks Unit, the children will act as “junior geologists.” Among other things, they will:

- Collect, observe, describe, sort, and classify rocks.
- Learn about the three major rock types (igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary) and how each is formed.
- Break apart a rock to discover that rocks are made of minerals.
- Observe and test for properties in a wide range of minerals.
- Search for everyday products made from minerals.
- Compare real fossils to similar present-day objects.
- Make fossil models to learn about how different types of fossils form.

In addition to the work your child will do in class, you and your child can explore this rich topic together at home in the following ways:

- Begin a rock collection. To make the experience most satisfying, help your child with storage, display, research, and identification.
- Visit the library and search for books about rocks to read together and share with the class. There are book suggestions on the Science Companion web site. This web site also features a list of recommended web sites about rocks. The address is: **www.sciencecompanion.com**.
- Work together on the Family Link activities that are sent home from time to time. Your child may also want to repeat and vary some of the activities we do in class, as well as explain what they discovered and learned. Try to encourage their independent experimentation at home.

Collecting and studying about rocks is an engaging topic for children and adults. Hopefully, you will share some of your child’s enthusiasm, thereby learning with them while helping them explore.

Sincerely,