

Dear Families,

Although everything in our universe consists of matter or energy, we seldom think of matter on a daily basis. In the Science Companion® Matter Unit our class is starting, children's natural curiosity is kindled as they consider the question, "What is matter?" Through hands-on experimentation, children build an understanding of how matter changes between its solid, liquid, and gaseous states. They also investigate various mixtures to reveal interesting properties of matter. Along the way, children gain an appreciation of the experimental method employed by scientists everywhere.

During the Matter Unit, students will:

- Define matter and identify many of its common properties.
- Learn how to carefully measure weight and volume of materials.
- Become familiar with the common states of matter: solid, liquid, and gas.
- Observe condensation and evaporation of water to discover that variables like temperature affect the state of matter.
- Design and conduct a fair test—an experiment—to investigate their ideas about matter.
- Mix and separate solids and liquids to learn more about matter's properties.
- Discover how unusual mixtures have properties unlike other materials they explore in the unit.
- Observe examples of chemical changes.

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

- Read a **science book** that your child checks out from the class Science Center.
- Visit the **web site** at www.ScienceCompanion.com/links to find a list and description of recommended web sites about matter, if you have a computer at home with access to the Internet.
- Complete **Family Links** the teacher sends home from time to time. These handouts include:
 - Homework—Assignments your child is expected to complete and return to class.
 - Home Activities—Things you and your child can do together if you have the time and interest (please note that this is not required homework).

Making sense of the physical world in which we live is a very satisfying and engaging process for children and adults. We hope you share your child's enthusiasm and learn with them while helping them explore matter.

Sincerely,