

Dear Families,

Your child's class is starting a science unit about nature's recyclers.

Through a variety of hands-on investigations, the children will discover why the earth isn't buried in nature's waste and remains. In particular, they will focus on organisms that carry out the process of decomposition and recycle nutrients in an ecosystem.

During the Nature's Recyclers Unit, the children will:

- Discuss why the world isn't covered in nature's waste and remains.
- Examine organic remains and ponder where they came from and what will happen to them.
- Explore the sequence of decomposition in a variety of organisms.
- Study the functional structures and life stages of beetles, earthworms, and fungi.
- Examine and investigate earthworms, mushrooms, and mold.
- Look for evidence of decomposition in nature.
- Investigate how nutrient-rich earthworm castings (remains of digested food excreted by worms) affect the growth of plants
- Model how nutrients cycle through an ecosystem.

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:

- Read **science books** about nature's recyclers or decomposers together that your child checks out from the class Science Center or the local library.
- Peruse the **student reference book**, which provides readings, pictures, and other resources designed to enhance what your child learns in class.
- Visit the Science Companion web site at www.ScienceCompanion.com/Links to find a list and descriptions of recommended web sites about nature's recyclers
- Complete **Family Links** the teacher sends home from time to time.

The Nature's Recyclers Unit will be fun. We hope your child will bring their discoveries and enthusiasm home, inviting you to learn alongside them—asking questions, discussing their work, and sharing their adventures in science.

Sincerely,