LETTER TO PARENTS

WARNING — This set contains chemicals that may be harmful if misused. Read cautions on individual containers carefully. Not to be used by children except under adult supervision.

Dear Parents,

Our class is beginning a new science unit, the FOSS Mixtures and Solutions Module. We will be studying basic concepts in chemistry, finding out how materials interact with each other. Children will learn what happens when simple materials, like gravel, salt, and water, are put together. They will also learn techniques for separating the resulting mixtures and solutions. As our studies continue, we will investigate combinations of materials, like baking soda and calcium chloride (the salt used to melt ice on roads), that react when mixed, producing new products, like chalk, carbon-dioxide gas, and table salt. These are exciting discoveries.

The U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) requires the following label to be on student sheets associated with the use of these chemicals in the FOSS investigations: calcium chloride, citric acid, diatomaceous earth, Epsom salts, and kosher salt. It is a reminder to the students to exercise particular safety precautions when working with materials in the classroom.

You can bring chemistry to life at home by exploring familiar household materials in a scientific way. Some of the interesting chemicals you may have at hand include baking soda, baking powder, alum, table salt, Epsom salts, flour, sugar, cornstarch, and vinegar. Add to these a few pieces of “laboratory equipment” such as jars, margarine tubs, plastic cups, and spoons, and you are ready to extend the classroom experiences into your home. A reminder: just as we do at school, you and your child should review and follow important safety procedures, even when working with the most familiar materials.

- Have a plan before starting an investigation.
- Avoid skin contact with experimental materials, and clean up spills immediately.
- Rinse with water if materials contact skin, eyes, or clothes, and wash hands after completing experiments.
- Never taste the experiments.

Please continue to use the classroom website and watch for the home/school connection sheets I will be posting. These suggest ways for the whole family to investigate interesting aspects of chemistry. We are looking forward to many weeks of exciting investigations with mixtures and solutions. If you have any questions or comments, or have expertise you would like to share with the class, please drop me a note.

Regards, Mr. Briganti