Dear Parents,

Our third graders are beginning to learn multiplication and division facts. Our goal is to be fluent with all facts up to 12. We are exploring “things that come in groups,” such as eyes, fingers, sodas, and eggs. We will use these to solve problems, such as, How many eyes in your family? or How many wheels on five cars? We begin our exploration by thinking of groups of objects: for example, 3 × 4 is three groups of four or 4 + 4 + 4. I want the children to first begin to visualize what multiplication means.

Today we read a book called Each Orange Had Eight Slices by Paul Giganti Jr. and Donald Crews that presents counting situations. For example, one page reads:

“On my way to Grandma's I saw 2 fat cows. Each cow had 2 calves. Each calf had 4 skinny legs,” and asks the following questions: “How many fat cows? How many calves? How many legs were there in all?”

We explored the pages by counting, using repeated addition, and writing multiplication sentences. Your children then created their own pages for our class book that contained illustrations, statements, and “how many” questions.

We will be exploring multiplication and division facts using arrays and number bonds. Number bonds show the factor product relationship for multiplication and assist students in seeing the relationship between multiplication and division. For example, the number bond below shows that the factors 2 and 3 result in the product of 6. When students understand the number bond relationship of 2, 3, and 6 for multiplication, they will also recognize the relationship of those numbers for division. This will lead to the fact family: 2 × 3 = 6, 3 × 2 = 6, 6 ÷ 2 = 3, 6 ÷ 3 = 2

The array model visually shows the relationship. For example, in the array below we can visually see that two groups of five is 10, or 2 × 5 = 10.

Sincerely,

Mrs. F.

I will be sending home individual array cards for your children to use to practice and play games with, and examples of number bonds for you to work with at home.