Family Letter

Dear Family,

Your child has studied addition and subtraction with whole numbers and decimals in past years. Unit 2 of *Math Expressions* guides students as they study these topics in greater depth.

The main goals of this unit are

1. to help students extend their understanding of place value to include large numbers and decimals;
2. to help students add and subtract decimals and whole numbers;
3. to develop estimating and rounding skills as students engage in graphing activities;
4. to have students apply place-value concepts in a variety of real-world situations.

Students will extend and apply their knowledge of place value as they complete activities involving money and metric lengths. When the opportunity arises, ask your child questions about money amounts to help reinforce what is being taught in class.

To accomplish the second goal, students will use various methods of grouping. Students may use whatever method they prefer as long as they understand why it works and can explain it. To add and subtract accurately, students need to align the digits of whole numbers and decimals correctly. Observe your child as he or she adds and subtracts. Help align the digits when necessary.

The third goal is accomplished in several ways. Students will learn to use the scale on a graph to understand how to round a number. For example, they see that a number such as 3,879 is between 3,000 and 4,000, but closer to 4,000. So, 3,879 rounded to the nearest thousand is 4,000. Students will also be taught a method of *safe estimating* to prepare them for real-world situations. Ask your child to explain how this method works.

Finally, students will solve real-world problems that require adding and subtracting large numbers and decimals.

If you have any questions or comments, please call or write to me.

Sincerely,
Your child's teacher