What We’re Learning

During the next few weeks, our math class will be practicing addition and subtraction, and learning to work with expressions and equations. You can expect to see work that includes parentheses to show which operation to do first. You may wish to use the following samples as guides if help is needed.

Students should continue to practice addition and subtraction facts. It would also be helpful to encourage them to estimate answers to make sure their calculations are reasonable.

Sincerely,

Your Child’s Teacher

Vocabulary

- **expression**  A combination of numbers, operation signs, and grouping symbols.
- **equation**  A mathematical sentence with an equals sign.
- **variable**  A letter or symbol that represents a number in an algebraic expression.

Guiding Your Child

**Solving Equations**

Students will learn how to solve problems with parentheses.

\[
34 + (9 - 4) - 3 \\
= 34 + 5 - 3 \\
= 39 - 3 \\
= 36
\]

Students will also use variables to represent unknown amounts. Any letter or symbol can be used as a variable.

- \( p + 12 \) means 12 more than an unknown number.
- \( 11 - k \) means that an unknown number is subtracted from 11.

The class will learn how to find values for unknown numbers by using logical reasoning. (More formal methods of solving equations will be taught later.)

If \( p + 12 = 20 \), then \( p \) must be 12 less than 20. So \( p = 8 \).