Dear Family:

Your child is learning to see numbers as a group of 5 and extra ones. Making mental pictures by grouping units in this way will later help your child add and subtract quickly. Children benefit greatly from learning to “see” numbers without counting every unit.

Children start exploring these 5-groups by looking at dots arranged in a row of 5 plus some extra ones. Below are samples that show the numbers from 6 through 10:

- 5 + 1
- 5 + 2
- 5 + 3
- 5 + 4
- 5 + 5

The teacher gives the children a number and asks them to say it as a 5 plus extra ones. Children say the numbers in order at first. Later they can “see” the quantities even when the numbers are shown randomly.

On some homework pages, you will find instructions that say, “See the 5.” Your child is being encouraged to make a mental picture of a number that contains a 5-group. Later the children will be asked to see groups of 10 by combining two 5-groups. This will help them learn place value.

It takes repeated exposure to such groups for children to see the numbers quickly. Many of the visual aids in your child’s classroom include 5-groups. Children tend to absorb these visual patterns without realizing it.

If you have any questions or problems, please contact me.

Sincerely,
Your child’s teacher