



## Dear Family:

Earlier in the unit, your child solved addition problems by making math drawings and counting every object. Now your child is moving beyond drawings and is working with real equations. At this stage, children need a faster strategy that allows them to work directly with numbers. The method they are learning is called *counting on*. It is explained below.

In an addition problem such as  $5 + 4$ , children say (or “think”) the first number as if they had already counted it. Then they count on from there. The last number they say is the total. Children can keep track by raising a finger or making a dot for each number as they count on. The diagram below shows both the finger method and the dot method.

Finding the Total                       $5 + 4 = \square$

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5

Finger Method

6 7 8 9

• • • •

5 + 4 =

Dot Method

Counting on requires repeated practice. This is provided in class activities and homework assignments. Right now, your child is learning how to find unknown totals. In the next unit, he or she will learn to use a different Counting On strategy to subtract.

Counting on is a temporary method that children can use until they know all the math facts. Later, they will not need to count on at all, because they will automatically know the answer when the total is 10 or less.

**Sincerely,**  
**Your child's teacher**