Hello First Grade Families,

Can you believe that it is the last Friday of March already? I feel like this year has just flown by, and quite honestly, I am not ready for the year to end because I will have to say goodbye for the summer to the kids! It is amazing how close a classroom becomes over the course of a year, and we have really been working on being a community in our classroom, so we are even closer than ever!

 This week in ELA we worked really hard on comparing and contrasting texts of the same story line. For example, we read Cinderella, Cinderella Penguin, Cinderella Skeleton, Trollerella, and Dinorella. The kids then used a collaborative discussion to talk about what they noticed in their story versus the original Cinderella, and what the differences and similarities that we noticed between all of the texts. It was amazing to see the students get extremely involved in the conversations and in the books. They blew my mind with how much they noticed for differences and similarities. We will continue having these conversations for the rest of the year. We also started to work on opinions. We thought an opinion was what you like, but together, we decided that it is actually what you think, which may not be something you like all of the time. Please encourage your students to express their opinion in full sentences and to give reasoning for their opinion; this will help their opinion writing immensely, which we are starting next week. In fact, students dabbled in opinion writing and creating today. They were given a picture that looked like a duck or a rabbit. They had to decide what they thought it was and give a reason for why they thought that. It was a lot of fun to listen to their reasoning and ideas. We also worked on using words within words to solve new words (I know, that was a lot of “words”). Some language that you may want to use with your student while reading words is: “Oh look! In the word stop, I see the word top.” The more we point out words within words, the more the kids will start using that way of thinking to decode words as well.

 In Math, we worked more on adding 10, taking away 10, adding 1, and taking away 1. The students seemed to have grasped the concept, but once we did a paper/pencil task, they struggled. So, we stopped what we were doing and spent a few more days on the concept to really solidify it. Once they understood that adding 10 changes the place value by 1 ten, they were able to take away 10 with no problem. So, your student can tell you what 10 less than 67 is and what 10 more than 89 is! Isn’t that incredible? We will be working on comparing and contrasting two digit numbers next, and we will be taking the CFA for Unit 3 next week. Then, we will start on Unit 4, which is all about exploring adding and subtracting within 100.

 We learned about how animals communicate in the springtime this week by tying in main idea and details for a little literacy boost. We also double checked on our trout, which now really look like little trout. I will not be surprised if they start swimming up soon, which means that we will have to feed them until late May. Please feel free to come down and check them out at any time; we do love the company!

 With this letter you will notice a permission slip. GES will be going to Stratford Public School on April 8th from 12:15 to 2:15 to see their production of a play. The cost is $1 per student. We need these permission slips back by Tuesday, March 31st, 2015.

 I hope that you have a fabulous and safe weekend!

Ms. LaCasse

**Parent Reminders:**

* Permission Slip for Stratford Public School Play due on Tuesday, March 31st, 2015
* Scholastic Book Orders were due today
* Early Release Day on Thursday, April 16th, 2015
* Vacation from April 20th to April 24th, 2015
* Check out our classroom website too! It has been updated! <http://gesgrade1.weebly.com/>