Welcome Letter

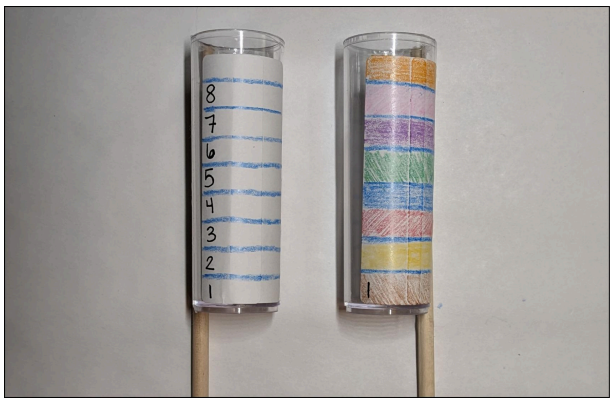
Dear Families and Caregivers,

Our kindergarten class is starting a science unit called, *How can we be prepared for the weather?* as part of the OpenSciEd elementary science curriculum. This unit develops science ideas about how people measure and record weather conditions (temperature, cloud cover, rain/snow, and wind) to notice patterns over time and how weather scientists, called meteorologists, forecast severe weather so that communities can prepare for and respond to these events. Students will observe local weather to generate questions about being prepared and staying comfortable in different conditions.

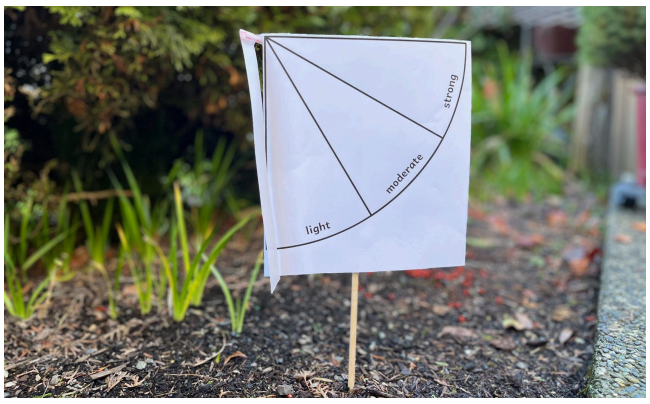
Over the course of the unit, students will figure out science ideas by

- observing and recording specific weather conditions, such as cloud conditions,
- collecting and analyzing weather data,
- asking questions, reading about meteorologists, and exploring severe weather preparedness, and
- making a Community Service Announcement to communicate weather preparedness information with families and community members.

Students will use thermometers to measure temperature, observe and record cloud conditions, and build rain gauges and wind gauges. They will look for patterns in their observations to describe typical weather conditions. Students will bring home their rain and wind gauges so you can collect weather data together outside school, too. (See images below.)



rain gauge



wind gauge

Students also learn that meteorologists use weather patterns to predict the weather (make weather forecasts) and that these forecasts are sometimes for severe (unsafe) weather. Students explore local severe weather and how to prepare and respond effectively.

Note that this unit includes discussions about severe weather and preparedness strategies. Trauma-informed strategies will support students in processing and discussing challenging weather-related events.

When discussing your child's science activities, refrain from giving direct answers to their questions. Instead, encourage them to make sense of the world by asking your own questions and listening to their ideas.

Support your child as they make sense of the weather by asking questions such as:

- What question(s) are you exploring about the weather and being prepared?
- What have you figured out about the weather we get here? How do we prepare for it?
- What family/community experiences have we had with weather?
- How did you (or your classmates) share ideas in science today?
- What new words have you been using to talk about what you're doing in science?
- How has your thinking changed as you've figured things out?