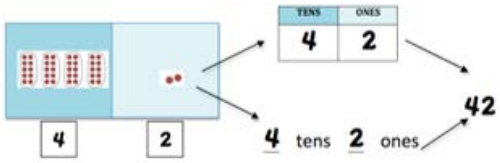
First Grade Counting and Place Value Parent Letter

Dear First Grade Family,

Focus of the Unit
Your first grader will focus on counting patterns and understanding place value during this unit. Students will have opportunities to count groups of up to 100 objects, and to read and write those numbers they have counted. They will count aloud to 150 to help to understand that counting patterns extend beyond 100. Students learn to start counting at any number and count up from that number, instead of always starting at one. As students work with two-digit numbers, they learn that the digits represent amounts of tens and ones. Then they use that knowledge to compare numbers to see which are less than, equal to, or greater than other numbers using the symbols <, =, and >. This understanding of place value is foundational as students build fluency with addition and subtraction.

Students begin thinking of a group of ten as a unit that can be quickly counted as "a ten" instead of ten individual objects. This is a big change for first graders that takes time and experiences with materials to develop. This happens in stages. To find the total, students usually start by counting **all** items by ones. Even after they can identify four groups of ten and two leftovers, they may still count **all** items to find the total. Finally, they are able to find the total based only on the number of tens and ones. Even then, they may like to count by ones just to make sure they are correct. Eventually they will know that it is true without recounting.	 "I have 4 groups of ten and 2 left-overs. That means there are 42 counters in all."

Building Off Past Mathematics
Last year your child learned to count groups of up to 20 objects, and to read and write those numbers. They also worked to count aloud to 100, starting at any number, and to count by tens to 100. They explored early place value concepts as they learned about teen numbers being made of "ten and some more." Students compared numbers within 10 using words to tell which was less than, equal to, or greater than, but they did not need to use the symbols in their comparisons.

Strategies that Students Will Learn

Students will learn to count up from any given start number within 150.

Students will learn to group objects by tens and left-overs as an efficient way to count larger groups of objects. They will write down the number of groups of tens and ones as well as the total number of objects. A variety of objects will be used for counting. Students will also learn to count items in a picture by circling groups of tens to help find the total.

Students may use a work mat labeled "tens" and "ones" to help them organize materials as they build numbers. This will help them understand what the digits represent. It will also help them see the importance of where the digits are within a number. The number 16 is much different from the number 61 due to the number of tens and ones the digits represent.

Ideas for Home Support

Give your child a number and have them to count up by ones from that number (within 150). Help them understand that as they count, each number is one more than the last. You may say, "Start at 84 and count by ones" or "What are the next five numbers after 49?" You could even take turns saying the next numbers until you get to the final number.

Challenge your child to count a large group of objects (up to 100) by grouping them into tens and ones to find the total. Then have them write the total. Some ideas for objects could be pennies in piles, straws grouped with rubber bands, or beans or bottle caps in small cups. You may ask: *How many do you have altogether? What's the digit in the tens place? Show me. How many ones are in that number? Show me.* You could split the objects into two groups and then ask students to compare to find out which group is <, =, or >. It's important that they use the vocabulary when they explain *less than*, *equal to*, or *greater than*, as they learn the meanings of the symbols.

Play the "What If" game. This can be done orally or you could have your child write the answers down for you. Ask, *"What if I had 4 groups of tens and 3 ones? How many would I have?"* Use a variety of numbers within 100. Don't forget to use zero as a digit!

Reading books is a great way to enhance learning! You may check out the following titles at your local library or you may find free online versions to support the learning in this unit.

- *From One to One Hundred* by Teri Sloat
- *The 100th Day of School* by Angela Shelf Medearis
- *The King's Commissioners* by Aileen Friedman
- *One Hundred Hungry Ants* by Elinor J. Pinczes
- *100th Day Worries* by Margery Cuyler
- *The Wolf's Chicken Stew* by Keiko Kasza

Thank you for serving as partners in your child's success as a mathematician!

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