

Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Meeting Our Needs and Wants.”

This week we begin our ninth unit in the Benchmark Advance program. As with the previous units, I am suggesting activities you and your child can do together at home to build on the work we’re doing in class.

In this unit, your child will explore how we make choices based on our needs and wants. For example, they’ll discover that needs, like food and water, allow us to live, while wants, such as a bike or a ball, are not necessary to live but are nice to have. The selections in this unit feature a variety of genres, including informational texts, realistic fiction, and poetry.

Comparing and contrasting needs and wants is a topic that every child can connect with and that you can explore further at home.

As always, should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Meeting Our Needs and Wants

In this unit, we'll find out how the choices we make are based on meeting our needs and wants, and think in depth about the question "Why do we make choices?" Here are some activities designed to continue the conversation about needs and wants, and to build on the skills and concepts your child is learning in school.

Topic Connection

Cut and Categorize

Divide a poster board in half. Label one side "NEEDS" and the other "WANTS." Collect magazines and flyers, and browse through them with your child, discussing what we need versus what we want. Help him cut out pictures, identifying each one as a "Need" or a "Want" and pasting them in the appropriate column on the poster board. Needs may include various foods, clothing, and shelter, while the wants may show toys, vacation scenes, etc.

Vocabulary Connection

Words that Meet Needs and Wants

Your child is learning new words associated with needs and wants, such as **helmet, siren, hose, uniform, hydrant, jacket, ladder, party, shelter**. Write these words on index cards and place them facedown in a pile. Take turns choosing a word. Discuss what the word means and whether it meets a need or a want.

Comprehension Connection

Problem Solvers

Some of the selections we'll read in class describe how some community workers, including firefighters and police officers, help meet our needs by solving problems, such as putting out fires and making sure people obey laws. Identifying problems and solutions in a text is an important reading skill. Practice recognizing problems and solutions by brainstorming other people in the community who help us solve problems. Some examples include doctor, veterinarian, crossing guard, and principal. Encourage your child to think about the problems these people solve and how.

Phonics Connections

Word Pattern Fun

In our phonics instruction, your child is learning to recognize words that have a long *a* sound and end with *-e*, such as **cave** and **gate**. On index cards, write the letters *-ate, -ave, -ace, -ake, -ame*. Shuffle the cards. Take turns choosing a card and saying a word that ends with the letters on the card. For example, for *-ate*, you might say **late**. Then challenge your child to think of a word, such as **date**. Keep going back and forth until neither of you can think of any more words that end in those letters. Then choose another card.