



Science Update – Earth Materials

Dear Family,

Our class is beginning a unit on earth materials entitled, Pebbles, Sand and Silt. In this unit, we will be working extensively with earth materials-observing, comparing, and communicating what we have learned. Our main focus of study will be on rocks, one of the most important earth materials. Our investigations will center on the properties of rocks and the uses of various rock sizes (pebbles, gravel, sand, silt, and clay). We will also investigate soil, its properties and uses.

The **Big Ideas** your child is learning from this unit include:

- scientists use a variety of methods and tools to observe the natural world and communicate their discoveries with others.
- solid rocks, sand and soil have observable physical properties that make them useful.
- men and women throughout the history of cultures have utilized earth materials to sustain and enhance life.

To help your child at home, try to find opportunities to talk about rocks, sand, gravel, soil and ways people use these materials, especially in construction (asphalt, concrete, bricks, mortar, etc.) and landscaping. Help your child learn the following vocabulary words by using them when you talk together about earth materials. You may also help your by helping him/her find a rock or two to contribute to our class rock collection.

Earth Materials Vocabulary

oclay: a type of soil made up of very, very small pieces of rock

oearth material: Things from the Earth: rocks, minerals, soil and water

ogeologist: A scientist who studies rocks

ogravel: rocks that are smaller than pebbles

ohumus: bits of dead plant and animal parts in the soil

opebble: a rock that is smaller than a cobble

oproperty: something you can observe about an object

orock: a solid earth material

osand: rocks that are smaller than gravel.

oscreen: a piece of mesh used to separate a mixture

oseparate: to take apart the ingredients of a mixture.

osilt: rocks that are smaller than sand; particles that are often found in sand.

osoil: a mixture of humus and different-sized earth materials.

Date _____

Osort: to put objects together by similar properties.

Otexture: how something feels; such as rough or smooth