

Dear Families,

Our class is beginning the Science Companion<sup>®</sup> Inheritance and Variation topic. During this topic the children will:

- Look carefully at dogs to understand what a trait is and how traits can have variations within the same kind of organism.
- Observe and describe the similarities and differences between parent animals and plants and their offspring to learn that organisms inherit traits from their parents.
- Read about the environmental influences on traits and use that information to identify the differences in offspring they observe.
- Read case studies about flamingos, frogs, and snowshoe hares and then use those to support a claim that the environment can affect animals' traits.
- Look at how variation in traits of frogs and mice affect their ability to survive in their habitats.
- Create bar graphs to analyze data about frogs.
- Play a game where they act as predators to understand how variation in color affects survival.

You and your child can explore this topic together at home by:

- Reading books together about living things, their traits, and how those traits are shared between parents and their offspring.
- Letting your child show you some of the explorations they have been doing in class.
- Visiting **resources.ScienceCompanion.com** to find a list of recommended web sites about inheritance and variation of traits in living things.

The *Inheritance and Variation* topic encourages students to develop a new understanding of the phenomena and processes that govern the characteristics and features of living things and impact their ability to survive in their habitat. We hope the children will bring their discoveries and enthusiasm home, and share their adventures in science.

Sincerely,