## Example Weekly Letter, First Grade

Dear Families,

This week your child will learn to add two numbers that result in 11 to 19 using a strategy called **make a ten**. Your child will learn this using a tool called a **ten-frame**.

This is a **ten-frame**. It has ten boxes formed by two rows of five. We use this tool to help students see groups of objects. This helps move them away from counting by ones.
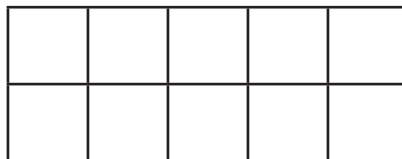
When using **ten-frames**, your child will learn to draw a circle inside each box to represent the numbers being added (called **addends**). For example, 9 + 7 might be represented on the ten-frame like this:
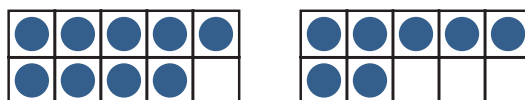
9 + 7

When using **make a ten**, the goal is for one **addend** to become 10. To do this, we have to take some circles from one ten-frame and move them to the other. This week, we will focus on taking circles from the ten-frame on the right. Next week, we will take from the ten-frame on the left.

How your child might talk about it:

9 + 7

I can take 1 circle from the ten-frame with 7 and move it to the ten-frame with 9.

I now have 10 circles in one ten-frame and 6 circles in the other.

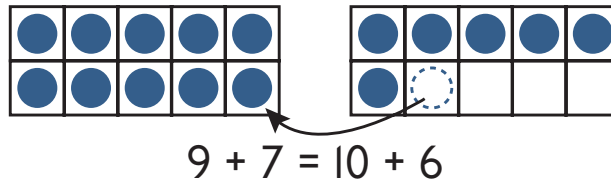9 + 7 = 10 + 6

I can add the parts: 10 + 6 = 16

(Continued)

What it might look like mathematically:

9 + 7

9 + (1 + 6)

(9 + 1) + 6

10 + 6 = 16

$$9 + 7 = 10 + 6$$

At the end of the week, talk with your child about using **making a ten** to add by asking them to show you how to find the total for 8 + 6 using this strategy. If they struggle, ask these questions:

- Do you think the answer will be greater or less than 10? Why?

- What added to 8 gives you 10?

- Can you draw your ten-frames and circles to help you?

Why we are learning it this way:

Growing up, you may have learned to add 9 + 7 by simply memorizing the fact. Memorizing can be challenging for students and does not help them when they move on to more challenging math. By using the make a ten strategy for addition, students deepen their understanding of our place value system and the relationships between numbers. They will continue to use this strategy throughout their schooling by adjusting to make a multiple of ten when they are adding greater numbers at the end of first grade and throughout second grade and also adjusting to make a whole with measurement in third grade and fractions in fourth grade.

If you have any questions, please reach out!

Sincerely,

[Signed Teacher or Grade 1 Teachers]