

## SCHOOL-HOME CONNECTION

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Families,

One of the characteristics of life is the ability to respond to other living things and to the environment. We will be investigating that characteristic in our next science unit, *Living Things in Their Environment*. Students will investigate the relationships among microorganisms in a model pond and the response of cells to substances in their environments. We will also experiment with the ways plants and simple animals respond to external stimuli, such as light, nutrients, and pollutants.

A stimulus is anything in the environment that elicits a response in an organism. Although plants cannot move from place to place, their body parts move in response to light and the force of gravity. Animals are able to move about in search of food and a favorable place in which to live. Even cells respond to their environment by allowing some substances to enter and blocking others.

As we investigate the response of living things to their environment, we will:

- ▶ Examine the feeding relationships among pond organisms
- ▶ Observe how a plant cell maintains water balance
- ▶ Investigate a plant's response to light and gravity
- ▶ Examine the need of plants for mineral nutrients
- ▶ Conduct experiments to determine how plants respond to various pollutants in the environment
- ▶ Test a sowbug's response to moist and dry environments
- ▶ Design and conduct experiments to test a microorganism's response to various environmental stimuli

Studies show that children learn science best by firsthand exploration. The hands-on activities in this unit will bring science alive! In addition, a *Living Things in Their Environment* reader will build communication and vocabulary skills, vital parts of science education.

You can help at home by encouraging your child to observe the responses of pets to stimuli such as food and water. Allow your child to care for houseplants so he or she can observe their response to light. Let your child take part in food shopping and meal planning. This will show your child the great variety of foods we eat and the great number of food chains we depend on.

Join me in helping your young scientist explore the living world.

Sincerely yours,