BITTERN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bittern PS strives to create a dynamic community partnership fostering lifelong learners enabled by the skills, values and attitudes necessary for success in a changing world.

PARENT INFORMATION BOOKLET

2014-2015

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BITTERN PRIMARY SCHOOL NO. 3933

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Acting Principal  Lyn Fyfe
Business Manager:  Sue Beech
WELCOME TO BITTERN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Message from the Principal

Bittern Primary School is committed to developing positive relationships with parents, students, teachers and the wider community. We are dedicated to providing our students with educational programs that prepare them for the ever changing future.

Today’s young people will need to become unequivocally international in their outlook, in their concerns, in their lifestyle, in their politics, in their work and employment patterns. The challenge for all of us will be preparing the current generation of students for a world that will be so vastly different to the one we experienced as children. It is both an exciting and frightening prospect all rolled into one!

The challenge for The Bittern Primary School community will be to ensure that our school and its programs remain at the ‘cutting edge’ of education to make sure our children really have a 21st Century advantage.

Students are encouraged to achieve to the best of their abilities and to reach their full potential through a varied curriculum resulting in assessment against the National Standards, Ausvels. Learning areas include:

- Health and Physical Education
- Interpersonal Development
- Personal Learning
- The Arts
- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Information and Communications Technology
- Thinking Processes

The staff work as a co-operative team whilst fulfilling their educational responsibilities within the guidelines of the School’s Policy.

Developing positive community relationships is significant to provide the best possible learning environment for our students. Parents, grandparents and other community members are actively encouraged to become involved and participate in a variety of school programs. The school is characterised by a welcoming and friendly atmosphere with high expectations of student learning.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide information to Prep parents to assist with a smooth transition for parents, students and teachers into our school. Bittern Primary School is concerned with the total development of children and works to create an atmosphere in which each child’s talent will be nurtured and so that all children will reach their full potential and feel secure in the society in which they live.

Lyn Fyfe
Principal
SCHOOL HOURS

School commences at 9.00am.
Morning recess is at 11.00am - 11.30am
Lunch is eaten in the classrooms at 1.30pm and 1.40 pm
Lunch recess is held between 1.40pm and 2.30pm
Dismissal is at 3.30pm

On wet days the children do not play outside but have supervised indoor activities in their classrooms.

It is important for children to arrive at school on time in the mornings. It is upsetting to the child and disruptive to the class if your child is late. Children who arrive late must be signed in at the office by their parent and collect a late pass which is given to their teacher.

Children are not supervised before 8.45a.m or after 3.45p.m and for safety reasons should only be at school between these times.

Prior to school vacations, school will dismiss at 2.30pm, and at 1.30pm on the last school day of the year.

If you wish your child to leave school early (for a dental appointment etc.) it will be necessary for you to inform the class teacher (in advance), go to the office to sign your child out and collect an early dismissal authorisation and then collect the child from the classroom. In the interests of safety, we will not send a child home at any time other than dismissal time.

TERM DATES

Term dates for 2015 are as follows:-

Term 1 28th January (teachers start) to 27th March *
Term 2 13th April to 26th June
Term 3 13th July to 18th September
Term 4 5th October to 18th December

* Each year government schools are provided with four student-free days for professional development, school planning and administration, curriculum development, and student assessment and reporting purposes. The first day of Term 1 is a student-free day in all government schools to allow for appropriate planning to take place for the arrival of students. The remaining three student-free days are determined by each individual school, parents will be notified of these dates through our many communication channels.

The school is closed on all Public Holidays
SCHOOL COUNCIL

School Councils are corporate bodies constituted at Victorian Government schools under legislation. They are representative in nature, with a membership reflecting the educational partnership of student, teacher and home. School Council elections are held each year. Councils have an important obligation to consult with and report to the school community. Government schools in Victoria have the responsibility to develop their own educational programs within Government policies and guidelines. The School Council is the focal point for shared decision making at the school. School Council responsibilities concern areas such as curriculum, finance, facilities, school community relations and the selection and employment of certain staff.

Bittern Primary School Council meets regularly to discuss various issues concerning the school community. Parents are welcome to attend these meetings as observers.

ASSISTANCE BY PARENTS

Throughout your child’s days at Bittern Primary School there will be numerous ways and opportunities for you to assist not only the school as a whole, but also your own child’s classroom activities.

The role of the School Council has been outlined. This is an opportunity for you to be involved with the school as a whole.

Within your child’s classroom, excursions and various other activities may see teachers requesting parental assistance.

If you are able to help, the school would be glad of your involvement in some or all of these areas.
CURRICULUM

The comprehensive curriculum offered by the school covers the eight key learning areas:-

- English
- Mathematics
- The Arts
- Science
- Technology
- Health & Physical Education
- Studies of Society and the Environment
- Languages Other Than English

Computers are provided in all classrooms as well as in our computer lab which caters for a whole class group at the one time. We also have pods of Ipads and Netbooks available for use in all classrooms.

LANGUAGES

Preps in 2015 will be introduced to a second language. At Bittern Primary School we are fortunate to have two teachers with a language qualification in Indonesian and in Japanese. The preps will continue with language instruction for their primary school years.

HOMEWORK

Homework in its many forms is encouraged; though it is not always set as a formal exercise. The completion of projects, reading and general schoolwork is left to the individual teacher to arrange. Early in the year each classroom teacher will give parents an opportunity to attend an information afternoon or evening. Matters such as homework and teacher expectations are discussed at this time.

PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEWS/REPORTS

Information sessions and interviews are planned each year, so that parents are well informed of their child's progress.

Progress report interviews are held mid year and written reports are issued mid year and at the end of the year.

The teaching staff continually evaluates the children's progress and if problems do become apparent, parents are made aware of the situation. This applies not only to academic subjects, but also to all aspects of the social and physical well being of the children.
BOOKLIST

The government provides basic funding direct to the school and the community is asked to complement this funding, in support of the provision of a higher quality program.

A booklist is distributed to all parents towards the end of the year. The associated costs include each student's personal books and requisites, supplies for general classroom use, duplicating and printing costs, paper, art and craft supplies, class texts, reading materials, and a portion of the costs associated with our Computer Budget. In the year 2013 this amount came to $360 (which includes $100 voluntary contribution). This is the cost for the WHOLE year however this does not include excursion, camps or sporting costs.

LOST PROPERTY

Lost property is stored in the Sick Room near to the office. Parents and children are advised to check this room if items of clothing have been lost. All garments should be clearly named before they are worn to school.

ABSENCES

Please encourage regular attendance, but remember that a sick child should be kept at home.

If your child is absent from school, please send written notification to school when your child returns.

Absences can also be reported through the Tiqbiz app on your phone.

It’s Cool to Be at School
SCHOOL UNIFORM

The school uniform for Bittern Primary School is compulsory. The supply of the uniform has been outsourced to a uniform company: Belez Pty Ltd., at the Somerville Store in the shopping centre. If you have any questions please contact either the uniform shop (phone: 5977 5277) or the school office.

Winter Uniform
Tunic
Navy blue pants (school approved)
Pale blue polo shirt with logo
Navy blue polo shirt with logo
Tunic windcheater with logo
Crew neck windcheater with logo
Pale blue skivvy (no logo)
Woollen beanie with logo
Vest
Bomber Jacket

Summer Uniform
Summer dress
Navy blue shorts
Pale blue polo shirt with logo
Navy blue polo shirt with logo
Navy blue slouch hat (logo optional)

School approved navy blue pants include navy blue track pants, cords, drill pants and leggings. Jeans, brand names and fashion wear are excluded.

FOOTWEAR
No bright colours.
When visible, socks should be navy blue, pale blue or white.
For safety reasons shoes must not have platform soles or open toes.
For PE and PMP suitable sports footwear must be worn.

GENERAL
• Please note hats must shade the face, ears and back of neck. Hats should be plain blue or have the Bittern logo.
• Grade 6 pupils will have the option of a specially printed windcheater and polo shirt.
• Iron on logos are available from the school office for $2.00.
• Hats are available from the school office for $15.00.
SCHOOL ACCIDENTS

If a child is ill or is injured at school the child will be taken to the First Aid Room and attended to by a staff member trained in First Aid. If it is necessary, parents will be contacted as soon as possible. In cases of extreme emergency, an ambulance will be called and the parents informed.

It is not the policy of the school to leave sick or injured children at school, as we do not have a nurse to care for them.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

We have an Emergency Information sheet for each child. This has an emergency contact telephone number (neighbour, relative, or friend) as well as the home and work number of parents. Relevant addresses, including that of your family doctor are also included. 

It is absolutely crucial to the welfare of your child that the school is notified immediately of any change to these addresses or telephone numbers.

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

Visitors to the school are asked to sign in at the office and collect a slip. This enables us to be aware of who is at the school at certain times. We appreciate your assistance in this matter. No child is to leave the school grounds during school hours for any reason UNLESS signed out by a parent (or authorised person). Always remember to sign children out at recess and lunchtime.
CHILDREN’S ILLNESSES

The school supports the notion that sick children should not be at school.

The best place for a sick child is at home in bed. Infection spreads quickly at school.

Furthermore, in compliance with the regulations, pupils with certain infectious diseases are to be excluded from school for set periods of time. In a few cases, the contacts are also to be excluded. You are advised to telephone the school for more details if your child is ill with any of the diseases listed:

INFECTION DISEASES - EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOLS

Chicken Pox, Diphtheria, Viral Hepatitis, Impetigo (School Sores), Leprosy, Measles, Meningococcal Infection, Mumps, Pediculosis, Whooping Cough, Poliomyelitis, Ringworm, Rubella, Scabies, Streptococcal Infections (including Scarlet Fever), Tuberculosis, Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fever.

ASTHMATICS

An Asthma Management Plan needs to be completed by parents of asthmatic children. These forms are available from the office. Parents will be reminded at the start of every year.

HEAD LICE

Head lice are friendly little creatures, which show no particular bias to whose head they are attracted. Having head lice is no indication of lack of cleanliness and should not have any social stigma attached.

Regular checks should be made of your child’s hair, particularly if he/she seems to have an itchy scalp.

If lice are found, the child’s hair should be treated. The children should be excluded from school until treatment has been carried out.

Please contact the school, should you become aware of a head lice problem, as we may need to have all children checked to prevent a major outbreak.
**SUN SMART**

The school community is very conscious of children being exposed to the sun and is taking steps to promote “Sun Smart” behaviour.

Children are encouraged to wear school hats when outside and this is compulsory in Terms 1 and 4.

Teachers also wear hats while on Yard Duty Supervision in Terms 1 & 4.

Children without a hat in Term 1 & 4 have a restricted play area in the shade.

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**SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICE**

The School Dental Service (S.D.S.) is a service for primary school children and is staffed by Dentists, Dental Therapists and Dental Nurses.

Great importance is attached to the prevention of dental disease, through preventive procedures such as fissure sealants, topical fluoride applications and through education and motivation of children, teachers, parents and the community.

Additional dental care provided by S.D.S. includes; examinations, radiographs if necessary, scaling and cleaning, fillings and extractions both on permanent and deciduous teeth where necessary.

For further information contact: School Dental Service, Department of Human Services, Suite 4
50 Thomas Street, Dandenong (P.O. Box 7003)
Ph. 1300360054
SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE

This annual visit serves two purposes:

a. to conduct medical examinations on all Prep children (parental approval and pupil medical history is obtained first.)

b. to conduct follow up examinations on older pupils who have a recorded medical history.

This visit is held at the school (usually in the First Aid Room). Whenever necessary, the nurse will contact parents to arrange an interview. This service is free.

A complete report on those pupils with medical problems is left at school and class teachers are made aware of any pupil disabilities. This can be helpful to the teacher eg. by placing a hearing or sight impaired child near to the front of the room. The pupil can maximise their learning ability.

MEDICINE

Children must bring written authorisation by the parent for any medication to be given to the student at school. Medication must be brought to the office where it will be placed in a secure storage area. No medicine will be given without the written permission of the parent. Permission forms are available at the office.

SOCIAL SKILLS

At Bittern Primary School we have seven school rules which will be introduced to the students during the year.

1. We treat everyone in a friendly way.
2. We play and stay where we should.
3. We help others.
4. We ask for help when we need it.
5. We listen and learn from our teachers.
6. We are proud to look after our school environment.
7. No matter where we are, we always follow the rules.
SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Reading recovery
This year we have been excited about offering the reading recovery program for students in grade 1 who need an extra ‘kick start’ with their Literacy development. Students receive 20 weeks of one-on-one instruction for 30 minutes a day with their specialist teacher trained specifically in the program. Students, teachers and parents of students who have participated in the program are amazed at the progress these students have made with strategies that they are using to improve their reading and writing capacity.

Kitchen Garden
Bittern Primary School was originally selected for the “Go for your Life” Kitchen Garden project with Stephanie Alexander. Stephanie Alexander’s philosophy is that involving children in growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing good food is the most effective way of introducing children to broader food choices now and for the rest of their lives.

All classes have the opportunity twice a term to cook a meal in the kitchen. The kitchen garden program has been established for several years now and is popular with both parents and students. It is a great involvement of parents is vital to support this program. The kitchen garden provides students with the chance to set the table and sit and have a meal and a conversation with the volunteers, something that some students don’t have the opportunity to do at home. The cost of the session is $2.00. the program has been modified to enable all students to participate. The kitchen is organised by a parent volunteer and the garden is tended by members of the Junior School Council.

The outcomes in terms of sustainability, awareness, life skills and community connectedness are many and varied for all of the students involved in the program.

Better Buddies
Through the Better Buddies program, children in their first year and last year of primary school buddy up and learn the values: caring for others, friendliness, respect, valuing difference, including others and responsibility. All children in the school learn these values through formal and informal activities. Better Buddies enables younger children to feel safe and cared for while other children feel valued and respected. Students in prep and Year 6 meet formally for a buddy session for 1 hour per week.

Next year’s grade 6 students will be visiting with the kindergarten students to participate in activities as a ‘get to know you’ program. The dates for these visits are:

- Wednesday November 5th 9.30am
- Tuesday November 18th 9.30am
YARD SUPERVISION

As pupil safety is of the utmost importance, staff (on a rostered basis) supervise the school grounds before school from 8.45am to 9.00am, at recess, lunch periods and from 3.30pm to 3.45pm each day.

Parents should telephone the school if they are going to be late collecting their child. This will allow us to make suitable arrangements for supervision and avoid unnecessary worry on the part of the child.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

The school has two supervised crossings and children who walk to and from school should use these crossings (on Frankston/Flinders Road and Myers Road).

Limited parking is available in Portsmouth Road. Parents are asked to refrain from double parking. There are very sound legal and safety reasons for making this request. Similarly, children should not be beckoned across the road in order to save a few seconds.

Parents are not permitted to park in the school staff car park.

STRANGER DANGER

We are constantly reminded of the problem of strangers approaching children, particularly on their way to or from school. The school makes the children aware of this danger and parents should reinforce this with their children.
BICYCLES AND SCOOTERS

Children are permitted to ride bicycles to school. It is the responsibility of parents to see that all bicycles ridden to school are roadworthy. Bicycles are stored in a special enclosure during the school day but no responsibility is taken for bicycles brought to school. At no time should bicycles be ridden in the school grounds. Children leaving the school via Portsmouth Road must walk their bikes to the Myers Road corner. They must not ride against the oncoming traffic or on the footpath.

CHILDREN MUST WEAR HELMETS

The Road Traffic Authority recommends that children under eight years old do not ride unsupervised to school.

FIRE DRILL

A fire drill and emergency evacuation is conducted regularly. In cases of emergency, children assemble on the school oval.

EXCURSIONS AND CAMPS

Excursions and camps form a very important part of a child’s total educational program. They are arranged to enable the children to have first hand contact with a variety of experiences. As with the classroom programs, the camps and excursions are part of a learning sequence, each experience building upon a previous one.

Parent permission is obtained prior to excursions being undertaken out of the immediate area. Parents are responsible for the payment of costs involved eg. transport, admission etc. Children will not be taken on excursions without a consent note. All payments must be made by the due date. Unfortunately no late payments will be accepted.
HOUSE SYSTEM

Children in the middle and upper grades are allocated to one of four houses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradman</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorpe</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Leaders are elected from the senior grades each year. They carry out various leadership tasks on behalf of their house and for other specific reasons. School Captains are elected by the Grade 6 children. The House System operates across the school.

TRANSFERS

If your child or children are leaving the school, a transfer note must be obtained from the school office and taken to the new school.

It helps the office staff, and the class teacher if reasonable notice can be given. This allows teachers to write reports for the new teacher, and collect the child’s belongings.

FRIDAY ASSEMBLY

Every 2nd Friday (Newsletter Week) we have a whole school assembly in the multi-purpose room, this commences at 3.00pm. All staff and children are expected to be in attendance. Every other week there are smaller assemblies, one in the senior and one in the junior school. The assemblies all conclude at 3.30pm. Parents are always welcome.

SOCIAL SERVICE

The school encourages support for a number of selected appeals. Children are given the opportunity to donate small sums of money as part of their training in good citizenship.
BANKING

Pupil banking day is Thursday. Parents will be invited to open an account for their child with the Bendigo Bank.

SCHOOL PHOTOS

School photos are taken annually. Parents are asked to make every effort to ensure that their children are dressed in School Uniform for the photos.

MONEY

All money requested for excursions, incursions, camps, hot dogs etc. must be given to the classroom teacher. A printed school payment envelope will usually be sent home with an excursion notice. Please endeavour to send along the correct money enclosed in the payment envelope or another clearly marked envelope. The envelope should be handed to the class teacher at the start of the school day. Spare payment envelopes are always available from the school office.
BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL
The school offers both a before and after school care program from 7.00am – 9.00am and 3.30pm – 6.00pm which is run through the OSHCLUB organisation. The program is run by a fully qualified assistant and provides students with a fantastic range of fun and educational activities. Students are also provided with healthy eating options.

CELEBRATIONS
Bittern Primary School regularly celebrates the success of our students. This takes the form of Principle’s Awards, Student of the week, Art and Sport awards, assembly items and newsletter articles.

COMMUNICATION
Schools are amazingly busy places so communication between school and home is vital. We have many forms of communication including a fortnightly newsletter which can be accessed online through the website, www.bitternps.vic.edu.au e-mail or hardcopy if required and full school assemblies in the same week as the newsletter. This information lets everyone know about the school activities and our future plans.

EFTPOS
Is available: at the school office.
You can pay curriculum related charges (e.g. school fees, camps and excursions.) with your debit or credit card over the counter.
There is a $10.00 minimum.

Unfortunately we cannot take payments over the telephone.
50 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CHOOSING A SCHOOL - BITTERN PRIMARY SCHOOL ANSWERS YES TO ALL OF THEM

Are all classrooms air-conditioned?

Is there a Prep Partners Program?

Are Speech Pathology Assistants available to support children with language disabilities?

Are Prep classes kept small?

Are Literacy and Numeracy school priorities?

Is there a Social Skills development program taught at all levels?

Is the school in a quiet street, off the main road?

Does every classroom have a bank of computers?

Is the office staff friendly and helpful?

Do you have direct walking access to the Myers Reserve, Bittern Stadium and Bittern Tennis Club?

Has the playground equipment had a recent upgrade?

Are there separate playgrounds for junior and senior students?

Are excursions part of the learning program?

Do teachers welcome parents in the classroom?

Is there an active School Council?

Is there a Leisure Program for senior students?

Do all children have access to a well resourced, purpose built library?

Can children access the Internet?

Is there a Vegie Garden for Grade 3 to 6 students?

Can children participate in the Student Representative Council?

Do children have the opportunity to participate in a sport at a district and state level?

Do you have access to a Psychologist?

Is the wellbeing of children a high priority?

Do senior children have the opportunity to participate in Interschool Sport?

Will all children attend an art lesson in a well-equipped art room each week?

Does the school provide a range of individual support programs?

Is there qualified First Aid staff on duty?

Is there a Uniform Shop?

Do you have access to a Speech Therapist?

Do you have access to a Social Worker?

Will children in Grades 3 to 6 have a swimming program?

Is this a Sun Smart school?

Is Religious Education available?

Is there a canteen for lunches on Tuesdays and icy poles in the hot weather?

Are there leadership opportunities for senior students?

Do grade 3 & 4 children have hens to care for as part of their program?

Do all children have Physical Education each week?

Will a Perceptual Motor Program be available for Prep children?

Is the children’s academic progress closely monitored?

Are playgrounds maintained to high levels of safety?

Will all children have access to a computer laboratory?

Will parents receive two written reports as well as interviews each year?

Is the curriculum planned according to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards?

Can I approach the school at any time with any concerns?

Is the Principal known for being open and approachable?

Is the library computerised?

Is school uniform compulsory?

Will all children in Grades 3 to 6 have the opportunity to participate in school camps?

Is the school implementing the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program in Grades 3 – 6?

Is there a fully functioning kitchen with 4 ovens, sinks and workbenches for students to use each week in cooking classes?
IDEAS TO ASSIST IN A SMOOTH TRANSITION FOR YOUR CHILD

- Visit the school regularly
- Familiarise your child with the playground and toilets
- Let them wear their uniform
- Use their school bag, lunch box, drink bottle
- Help to prepare lunches (beware of Glad Wrap)
- Dress and undress themselves
- Talk about school in a relaxed, casual tone
- Avoid making it a big deal
- Establish some routines at home eg. Collecting mail, setting table
- Give them practice at following two or three directions at one time
- Over the holidays try to socialise with children who will be in the same class
- Don’t drill them on reading or writing or learning to count
- Encourage them to know their name and address and phone number
- Allow them to speak for themselves (when you are out visiting)
- Do not say you will miss them when they are at school
- Attend all transition programs the school offers
- If you have time ask if you and your child can sit in on a class occasionally
- Become familiar yourself with the school’s philosophy, discipline policy, classroom structure and parent committees
MATHEMATICS AT HOME

All parents can encourage their children to **EXPLORE, DISCOVER AND CREATE** mathematical situations that will assist them to understand and enjoy today’s mathematical world.

**TOYS AND GAMES**

Give some thought to the educational value of the toys and games you buy. **Jigsaws** are excellent for co-ordination and manipulative skills.

**Construction toys:** ask your child to tell you about the things that they make with Lego or other materials, eg. “I made a tall building (or a long bridge or small car, etc.).” These are the most important concepts for the child to grasp in Mathematics.

**Encourage** your child to talk in sentences when he’s describing what he’s been doing.

**Card games** are most helpful for matching and counting activities, eg. count spots on cards, match cards of same suit or value. Snap and Concentration type games can be played to encourage matching and counting skills.

**Board games** such as Snakes and Ladders, Ludo etc. using a dice or a spinner give enjoyment and practice in Maths. When buying a present items such as Dot to Dot books, magnets, simple calculators, farm sets etc. provide excellent mathematical material.

**Bath time** provides the opportunity for children to explore the properties of water. Use of various shaped plastic containers will lead the children to discover which container holds more, less, most, least etc.

**Cooking** involves many mathematical concepts, eg. measuring, weighing, counting and comparing volume and is an excellent opportunity to share language and number experiences with your child.

**Shopping** trips give the opportunity for the children to learn about money, weighing of items, size, shape, colour and number.

**Sand pits:** children can fill up various shaped containers. Which hold more or less? What items are heavier or lighter etc.

**Trips to the beach:** many possibilities for counting (families, shells), sorting into groups (shells, stones), making patterns, construction (sandcastles).

**During READING TIME** children come across many fairy stories and nursery rhymes with numbers in them. Even if children cannot yet recognise the numbers, they can be made aware that the pages are numbered. Count the pages and talk about books eg. on which page is your favourite picture? Is the book thick or thin?

**ENCOURAGE, CHALLENGE AND DISCUSS MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS WITH YOUR CHILD**