Dear Parents,
Here is a letter explaining what to do if your family is taking a vacation during the school year and your first grader will miss several days of school. Usually when a family decides to take a vacation, mom or dad emails me and asks me to send "homework" or "worksheets" for the time you'll be gone. I need to explain how my classroom works. I don't use "worksheets" very often. Research has shown that filling out worksheets doesn't significantly improve learning. I don't have worksheets that will do what we do each day in class. I don't pass out worksheets and have the kids work on their own. We work together. We interact and discuss. I model a skill and then we work together and then the kids try it on their own. We practice skills in journals and on dry erase boards. First grade is 6 hours of interaction and discussion and authentic practice. I can't duplicate that on a worksheet. But I can give you a mini "sub" plan. So you'll be the teacher and you can guide your child in doing things that we do daily in first grade.
Here is what your child needs to do and he/she will need you to work with him/her:
1. Writing: Have your child keep a vacation journal. Your child should try to write **at least three** sentences per day. Help your child generate an idea. Then your child can draw three boxes for pictures. In the first box he/she should draw a quick picture of what happened first. Then in the middle what happened next and in the last box, what happened last. Then help your child generate at least one sentence per picture. Your child needs to do the writing. I don't usually spell words for kids. Your child needs to "stretch" the word out slowly and listen to each sound. Then your child needs to write a reasonable representation of each sound heard. It is OK if your child doesn't spell the word correctly as long as he/she uses a letter that could represent the sounds heard. Some words can't be sound spelled. I have these words on our "heart word" wall at school. You absolutely can help your child spell weird words. But for the most part, your child should be trying to write a letter/s for each sound heard in a word. When the writing is done, your child can illustrate the story if desired. If your child says it is too hard—you need to know that he/she does it at school every day! When your child returns to school, we will be excited to have him/her share the journal!
2. Math: Take Compare cards (or other cards with numbers) and play Compare and Double Compare. Take your child's homework folder and do as many math "homework" activities as you can. Take copies of any Math Races and have your child practice one each day. Remember the goal is to complete the page in 5 minutes or less and only miss up to 5 problems.
3. Reading: Read Take Home Books. Write a written response (connection—what the story made your child think about) after reading a book. Take your child's homework folder and do as many literacy "homework" activities as you can, including having your child work independently on Lexia.

Any items I mentioned above that you would like to have a copy of, can be found on our class website: http://missschmidts1stgrade.weebly.com/

Thank you and have a great trip!
Jamie Schmidt