

A Parent is a Child's Most Important Teacher



You can help your child succeed in mathematics by . . .

- Talking with your child about his/her mathematics learning experiences at school.
- Familiarizing yourself with books, games, resources, websites, and television programs that encourage mathematics learning.
- Discussing with your child the importance of mathematics in his/her daily life and pointing out examples of how people use mathematics in daily life.
- Encouraging your child to ask questions, solve problems, and to explain his/her solutions.
- Modeling how to solve math problems.
- Challenging your child in his/her areas of math strengths and providing support in areas of math weaknesses.
- Continuing to learn mathematics with your child!

Help Your Child See How Mathematics is a Part of Daily Life

Parents and other family members can influence their student's math skills. Perhaps you do not realize it, but whenever you sort objects, read maps or schedules, compare prices, make change, or use a calculator or calendar, you are a model of mathematical behavior. When you measure, weigh, work with family finances, or figure out how much wallpaper will cover a wall, you are a living textbook! The best help you can give your student in math is simply to make your child aware of when and how to use math. Whenever possible, talk through activities with your child and encourage him/her to take part in them. Think out loud, make estimates, check them, correct mistakes, and try more than one way to solve a problem. When you do, you provide your child with important experiences in mathematical thinking.

Here are a few math activities that you can do with your child.

Estimation Activities

1. Young children can estimate by using items like pencils, crayons, or parts of their own bodies. Older children can use regular units of measurement like rulers or measuring cups and spoons.
2. Ask your child to guess the number of items in your home. Make a list. Then count them together. Examples may include pillows, windows, doors, chairs, and shoes. Then compare estimates with an actual count. Make comparisons between items to help young children understand the concepts of "more" or "less" and put them into categories.
3. Have your child complete his/her own height and weight charts. Begin by estimating, actually measure, and then graph the information. Keep a record over a period of time.
4. Ask your child to determine how much time he/she will have to wait until his/her favorite TV program comes on.
5. Have your child estimate how many minutes or hours he/she spends watching TV each evening, weekend, or during an entire week.



Traveling Activities

1. Discuss directions (north, south, east, and west) to give your child a sense of coordinates. Have your child use street maps to find travel routes and addresses, estimate the time of your arrival, and then compare that to the actual time it took to arrive at a given destination.



2. Have competitions when traveling. Have your child count red cars or see who can find the largest number formed by the numerals on a license plate.
3. Have your child practice, record, and read the large number on license plates viewed. Find the largest number in a given time period of travel.
4. Have your child find the differences between certain distances traveled. Find out how much farther you traveled on the first day than you did on the second day.

Cooking/Shopping Activities

1. Let child help with the cooking by measuring the ingredients and checking cooking times and temperatures. Older children can increase or decrease recipes.
2. Have child figure out how to cut a pizza, cake, pie, or sandwich for different numbers of people.
3. Have child determine how much or how many of a grocery item is needed for the entire family, or how much is needed for a given recipe.
4. Have child determine how much a single item costs that is sold by the package (i.e., a single roll of toilet tissue purchased in a four-pack, one roll of paper towels purchased in a two-pack, the price of one can of soda packaged in a box of 12 or 24, etc.).
5. Have child determine and select the "best buys" and then prepare the shopping list (i.e., one item costs \$7.50 and 2 items cost \$14.00).



Playing

1. Encourage child to play games that involve counting, finding patterns, using strategy, and solving patterns.
2. Allow child to use a calculator and encourage "messing around" with it to explore numbers, look for patterns, and investigate number patterns.
3. Relate sports and the stock market to mathematics. The daily newspaper is full of scores, schedules, statistics, and graphs.
4. Card games provide excellent opportunities for learning math concepts. "Go Fish" and "War" help younger children to recognize numbers and things that are alike, to group and sort, and to use strategy in discarding to win. Gin Rummy, Canasta, and Cribbage are more complex card games for older children.
5. Ask child questions that require simple mental math. Use questions such as, "What are two numbers that add up to 7? What number is two less than 17? Eighteen is twice as big as what number? Can you name two numbers that multiply to 12 at the same time they add up to 7?"
6. Play math "Jeopardy" with your child. Give child a number and ask him/her to find a question for which the number is the answer.
7. Plan art activities that use measurement, patterns, and/or geometry.



Parent Tips for Helping with Homework

- Set aside a regularly scheduled time for your child to complete his/her homework
- Provide a quiet environment for your child to work
- Be positive about your child's efforts
- Offer guidance, NOT solutions
- Help your child explain what is being asked
- Have your child "tell a story" that illustrates the problem

