

Math Tips for Parents

Your involvement is critical for your child's success in math. Does that mean you have to be a math wiz yourself and have the ability to teach your child the concepts being taught at school? No, it does not. However; it does mean you should provide the necessary support for your child to become an effective math learner.

Here are a few helpful tips that should assist you in giving guidance and assistance to your child in the area of math.

1. **Communicate with the teachers** - find out what concepts will be taught. Inform the teacher if your child is having challenges. Ask if additional assistance is provided during times outside of class time.
2. **Identify your child's areas of weaknesses and work on them.** Try to identify any basic skills that your child may have challenges in such areas as knowing the times tables, knowing basic addition and subtraction facts or basic number sense. Basic facts can be reinforced through songs/raps, finger tricks, card and dice games, and drills. Is the language of math or math vocabulary a stumbling block for your child? If so you may need to review math related vocabulary or key words that may be associated with different operations. Organizing and setting up problems on paper may be a challenge. If so, something as simple as providing graph paper can assist with aligning numbers for accurate computation.
3. **Provide relative and practical opportunities at home for your child to practice math skills.** Involve your child in cooking, counting money, creating family budgets, estimating when shopping, and playing games that involve counting and numbers. Board and card games are excellent tools to reinforce numeracy skills. Mathematics is a part of our daily lives. Be sure to provide opportunities for your child to make connections between daily experiences and their math class.
4. **Tap into useful internet resources.** There are a number of sites that provide math practice through games and activities. Common sites include www.AAAMath.com, www.mathforum.com, and www.coolmath.com just to name a few. The resources found at www.Khanacademy.org are also growing in popularity for elementary through high school students.
5. **Encourage good study habits.** Teach your child the importance of being organized and provide an environment that allows for quiet, organized study and homework time. Have ongoing review with your child by questioning, teaching the importance of checking over work and quizzing on a regular basis.



6. **Show interest in your child's work.** Encourage and support, but remember it is not your job to do the homework for your child. Give lots of praise and try not to push your child too much.

As you lend your support at home, if you find that your child continues to struggle with understanding math concepts, despite efforts from yourself and extra assistance provided by the teacher, you may need to have your child assessed to determine exactly where your child's strengths and weaknesses are.

If your child has a specific type of math learning disability you may need to secure the services of a trained math tutor for additional reinforcement of concepts. Approaches that work best involve the use of lots of manipulatives (hands on experiences) and are based on your child's learning profile (strengths, learning style, interests etc.). Math is also most meaningful when taught within a context that your child can relate to (real life experiences).

Your child's struggles with math do not have to become a constant battle. With extra communication with the teacher, the use of good strategies, close monitoring and support, and tutoring if necessary, your child can reach his/her fullest potential in the area of math.