

Parent-Family Engagement Tips-Math

Every day with children, there are many things that parents and families can do to help children learn problem-solving and to communicate mathematically. These skills are fundamental to learning mathematics.

Below are some suggestions on how to support your child's math learning.

Help your child see that "learning math" is a part of everyday life. From the sale price of clothing to the amount of gas needed to travel from one city to another, mathematics is important to us every day. Help your child to connect his/her "school" math to practical events.

Point out that many jobs require mathematical skills. Your child may recognize that many jobs have an emphasis on math including scientists, engineers, computer technicians, and accountants. However, she/he may not realize that many other jobs also require math. Point out that math is also used in jobs such as managing a business, carpentry, plumbing, fixing cars, sales, and clothing design among many others. Let her/him know that having strong math skills will open many great career opportunities!

Stimulate your child's interest in educational technology. Help your child learn how to use calculators, but don't let him/her rely solely on them to solve math problems. Encourage your child to learn to use computers to "extend learning" and to find math games and math-related websites...a positive use of technology.

Show your child that you use mathematics. Let your child see you use math and talk about how using that math is helpful in daily life. For example, paying for an item, determining if you received the proper change or a refund, balancing your checkbook, managing your mortgage, paying your rent, figuring out mileage, and so on.

Involve your child in math at home. Use practical opportunities to learn and use math at home such as counting change, checking temperatures, assisting with measuring for recipes, telling time, using the calendar, and so on. The more experience children receive at home, the more support it will be for learning at school.

Set high standards for your child in mathematics achievement. Encourage your child to succeed in math and support interest in math related careers.

Check math homework and other assignments. Check to see that your younger child has finished her/his math homework assignments. If your older child is having trouble finishing assignments, check that work, too. After your child's teacher returns math homework, have your child bring it home so that you can read the comments to see if work has been completed satisfactorily. Contact your child's math teacher if you have concerns. Limit your assistance to seeing that your child understands the assignments, helping guide the learning, and making sure that she/he has the necessary supplies to do them.

Learn more about the school's math programming. Feel free to ask questions about the math being learned in school. Ask questions such as the following:

- What math teaching methods and materials are used? Are the methods used to teach math based on scientific evidence about what works best? Are materials up to date?
- How much time is spent on math instruction?
- How does the school measure student progress in math? What tests does it use? How do the students at the school score on state assessments of math?
- Does the school follow state math standards and guidelines?
- Are the math teachers highly qualified? Do they meet state certification and subject-area knowledge requirements?

Explore the school website. School websites can provide you with ready access to all kinds of information, including homework assignments, class schedules, dates for school district and state tests, and even links to learning games. We invite you to explore all that our school websites have to offer.