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Mississippi Math Act Math-At-Home Plan

MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Math-At-Home Plan for K-5 Students

The Math-at-Home Plan is designed to help families support their child's mathematics growth beyond the classroom. By encouraging regular practice, mathematical conversations, problem solving, and connections to everyday life, families can reinforce the skills and concepts students need to become confident mathematical thinkers. Consistent opportunities to make sense of mathematics at home can strengthen number sense, reasoning, accuracy, and perseverance.

This plan supports the goals of Mississippi's Senate Bill 2294 mathematics requirements by strengthening the partnership between schools and families to improve mathematics outcomes for students in kindergarten through grade 5. Together, educators and families can help students build strong foundational skills, explain their thinking, and apply mathematics successfully in school and everyday life.

Make Mathematics A Daily Habit

Mathematics is part of everyday life. Short, consistent opportunities to count, estimate, measure, compare, calculate, and solve problems can help strengthen your child's mathematical understanding. Families can support mathematics by talking about numbers during daily routines, playing games, asking children to explain their thinking, and encouraging more than one way to solve a problem. Mathematics success grows through meaningful practice, reasoning, and confidence.

Set a Weekly Mathematics Goal

- Spend 5-10 minutes practicing or talking about mathematics at least 4-5 days each week.
- Use everyday moments such as shopping, cooking, traveling, or waiting for appointments to discuss mathematics.
- Practice with objects found at home such as coins, cards, dice, measuring cups, clocks, calendars, or household items.
- Encourage your child to explain how they know an answer instead of focusing only on getting the answer quickly.

Ask Questions During Problem Solving

- **Before solving: Help your child make sense of the problem by asking questions such as:**
  - What is the problem asking you to find?
  - What information do you know?
  - What strategy or representation might help?
- **During solving: Encourage your child to:**
  - Use drawings, objects, number lines, equations, tables, or other representations
  - Explain each step and why it makes sense
  - Try another strategy if the first approach does not work
  - Check whether the answer is reasonable.
- **After solving: Spend a few minutes discussing the solution by asking:**
  - How did you solve the problem?
  - Why does your strategy work?
  - Can you solve it another way?
  - How do you know your answer is reasonable?
  - What mathematical evidence supports your thinking?
  - What did you learn that could help you with another problem?

Build Number Sense

Help your child develop flexible thinking about numbers by:

- Counting forward and backward from different starting numbers.
- Comparing quantities and numbers and asking, “Which is greater? Which is less? How do you know?”

    - Breaking numbers apart and putting them back together in different ways.
    - Estimating quantities, lengths, amounts, or totals before finding an exact answer.
    - Using place value to explain the value of digits in a number.
    - Connecting addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to real situations.

- Practicing basic facts for accuracy and efficiency while still emphasizing understanding.
- Using mental math strategies and discussing why they work.

Use Representations to Make Sense of Mathematics

Students understand mathematics more deeply when they can connect concrete objects, visual models, and symbols. Encourage your child to show mathematics in more than one way before relying only on a written procedure. Representations help students make sense of relationships, explain ideas, and connect concepts to equations.

Help your child show their thinking

When your child works on a mathematics problem, encourage the use of:

- Concrete objects such as counters, coins, blocks, beans, or measuring tools.
  Examples: build groups, model fractions, compare quantities, or measure objects.
- Visual models such as drawings, arrays, number lines, tape diagrams, tables, or graphs.
  Examples: draw equal groups, show jumps on a number line, or represent part-whole relationships.
- Equations and mathematical symbols that connect directly to the model and the child’s explanation.
  Ask your child to explain how the model and equation represent the same mathematical idea.

Routine for Solving an Unfamiliar Problem

When your child encounters a challenging mathematics problem:

1. Read or restate the problem and identify what is being asked.
2. Identify the important information and choose a strategy or representation.
3. Solve the problem and explain the reasoning used.
4. Check the answer for accuracy and reasonableness, then revise if needed.

Talk About What Your Child Is Thinking

Mathematics is more than producing an answer. It involves making sense of problems, reasoning, explaining ideas, and making connections. Conversations about mathematics help children organize their thinking and develop confidence. The most important thing is creating opportunities for your child to explain what they did, why it works, and what they might try next.

Talking about your child's mathematics

During homework, games, cooking, shopping, or other routines, ask questions that encourage your child to explain their thinking:

- What do you notice?
- What do you already know that can help?
- Why did you choose that strategy?
- What part was challenging?
- How can you show your thinking with a model, drawing, or equation?
- Is there another way to solve it?
- How do you know your answer makes sense?

Encourage your child to justify their reasoning

Strong mathematical thinkers explain why an answer or strategy makes sense. Encourage your child to use numbers, models, equations, examples, and mathematical language to support their reasoning.

Try asking:

- "What makes you think that?"
- "Can you show me how you know?"
- "What mathematical evidence supports your answer?"

Make Connections

Help your child connect mathematics to ideas they already understand and to the world around them:

- Math-to-self: Where have you used this type of mathematics before?
- Math-to-math: How does this connect to another skill, representation, or strategy you know?
- Math-to-world: Where might people use this mathematics in everyday life or a career**?**

Write About Mathematics

Writing can help your child organize mathematical thinking, explain a strategy, and show understanding. Math writing does not have to be lengthy. A few sentences, a labeled model, or a short explanation can help students become stronger problem solvers and communicators.

Encourage your child to write about their mathematics

After solving a problem, encourage your child to record their thinking. Simple activities include:

- Explain a strategy: “How did you solve the problem?”
- Justify an answer: “Why does your answer make sense?”
- Compare approaches: “Which strategy was more efficient for this problem, and why?”

Use Mathematics in Everyday Life

Mathematics is not just a school subject. Encourage your child to use mathematics while they:

- Count money and compare prices
- Measure ingredients while cooking
- Tell time and calculate elapsed time
- Estimate distances, quantities, and totals
- Create or follow a budget
- Read tables, graphs, schedules, and sports statistics