

## Math Around the Home

*For parents of students in the primary and junior grades*

### How can you make math meaningful for your child?

Studies show that children learn math concepts the best when they are presented with meaningful, real-life contexts for their learning. Using everyday situations, you can help your child see the connection between what they are learning in school and what happens in real life.

#### **DO** cook and bake with your child

- Cooking and baking help children to see the practical use of fractions, as well as helps them to explore how to add, subtract and multiply fractions as recipes need to be increased or decreased, depending on your family's needs.
- Cooking and baking also helps children to practice reading time and work on their elapsed time skills (e.g., What time will it be on the clock when the cookies are finished baking in twelve minutes?)

#### **DO** take your child shopping with you

- The grocery store is an excellent place for children to learn about unit rates (e.g., Is it more cost effective to buy the small box or the larger box of the same item?)
- Children can practice their estimation skills and mental math by keeping track of the approximate cost of all of the items in your cart.

#### **DO** get your child to help you with home renovation plans

- Have your child help to estimate how much paint, carpet, tile, etc. that will be needed to complete a project
- Your child can also help with putting together and following a budget

- Children can practice rounding to the nearest nickel when the purchases are paid for with cash, as well as gain experience with counting money and making change
- Working with a budget helps children to develop financial literacy, learning to put "need" before "want" and get a better understanding of the value of money, literally and figuratively

#### **DO** play games with your child

- Many board games emphasize basic math skills, such as addition, subtraction and multiplication as pieces are moved around the board or scores are kept as rounds progress.
- Dice games, dominoes and card games emphasize number recognition (e.g., the pattern of the dots leads to an immediate recognition of "5" or "2").
- Skipping games, jacks, and other physical games also have the additional bonus of helping children to stay active while reinforcing math skills.
- Video games such as Tetris, Blokus, and Rush Hour help students to practice their logic and spatial reasoning skills.

#### **DO** consider an allowance for your child

- Teaching a child to save for the extra things they want is a good practice to start young.
- Discuss what your son or daughter is saving for (their goal), how much it will cost, and how long that will take
- If you are tiling a floor or wall, have your child help to determine what pattern to use.

#### **DO** have your child help to plan and plant your garden

- Gardens and plantings look more appealing with they are symmetrical, so

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children can explore the idea of symmetry when helping outside.

- Students can also practice their measurement skills and explore ratios when looking at the number of plants that are needed and how much space the groupings of plants require.
- If you grow vegetables and herbs, your child can also learn about ratios as they relate to the use of fresh foods in recipes, adjusting requirements to suit the needs of your family.

**DO** involve your child when planning a family outing

- Reading train, bus and subway schedules require a slightly different skill set, and learning and practice this skill is important for children to learn.
- Children can also practice their spatial reasoning skills as they learn to read and follow maps of destinations, places like the zoo, the museum, or even the mall.
- Discussions about distances and time are also useful, and your son or daughter could help to predict your time of arrival at your destination based on either the posted schedule or based on rate of travel.
- Budgeting may play a role in an outing or trip as well, and if you are travelling by plane, the weight allowances for baggage allow your child to practice another form of measurement.

### **Some Useful Websites**

Help your Child Save Money

[www.moneycrashers.com/teaching-kids-save-money/](http://www.moneycrashers.com/teaching-kids-save-money/)

Baking with Children

[www.bbc.co.uk/food/collections/baking\\_with\\_children](http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/collections/baking_with_children)

Cooking with Kids

[www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/packages/recipes-for-kids/cooking-with-kids.html](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/packages/recipes-for-kids/cooking-with-kids.html)

Family Gardening

[www.kidsgardening.org/family-gardening](http://www.kidsgardening.org/family-gardening)

Family Math Games

[www.engagedfamilygaming.com/board-games/7-board-games-that-teach-math-skills-and-are-actually-fun/](http://www.engagedfamilygaming.com/board-games/7-board-games-that-teach-math-skills-and-are-actually-fun/)

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