

What Parents can do at Home to Help Children with Maths

Maths is around us all the time. In today's high-tech society, everyone needs a strong foundation in maths to be successful. People need quick reasoning and problem-solving skills. They need to estimate and use mathematical thinking.

Sometimes, children don't see how useful maths can be. Parents can help. When you or your child use maths in everyday activities, point it out. Did your child figure out how many weeks' allowance it will take before he can buy that video game? Well, that's maths!

Here are some activities you can do at home with your child to develop a healthy interest in maths, an appreciation of why maths is useful, and a positive attitude about studying maths in school.

Maths Activities for the Family at Home

1. **Take a maths walk.** When you walk in the neighborhood, count the number of animals, birds, fire hydrants, etc. Look for geometric shapes and name them. Also, estimate how far you'll walk—later, perhaps you can check it with the car odometer.
2. **Practice mental maths.** When you use maths in your daily life, ask your child to figure out the answer for you. This is especially great when cooking.
3. **Use the newspaper for a maths scavenger hunt.** Ask your child how many maths-related items he can find in the daily newspaper.
4. **Use maths at the grocery store.** Ask your child to weigh vegetables, count items in the cart, compare prices, or estimate the total grocery bill. You can also use coupons to help teach maths.
5. **Ask silly questions** that require maths to answer them: "How many minutes are in your birthday?" "What percentage of pizza did Dad eat tonight?" Ask your child how he figured out the answer.

Five-Step Plan to Solve Word Problems

Even kids who do well in maths can sometimes get confused by word problems. Help your child follow these five steps when solving any word problem.

1. **Figure out the question.** What is the question asking? What do I need to answer?
2. **Write down the information.** What information is needed to solve the problem? Sometimes, extra information in the problem can throw off your child. It helps to practice writing down just the information that is required.
3. **Develop a plan to solve the problem.** There may be one step to solve the problem, or there may be several. It's important to have a plan clearly in mind before solving the problem.
4. **Solve the problem.** Make sure your child checks his plan so important steps aren't left out.
5. **Check the work.** Was the answer to the problem correct? Reread the problem to see if the answer makes sense. Also, encourage your child to check his answer to make sure he hasn't made any simple errors.

Tips for Students when Studying for Maths

Studying for maths is similar to studying for any other subject in school. There are just a few variations. Here are some tips to get into the good habit of studying. Remember, success in school is dependent on success with listening, note-taking, and studying skills.

1. **Frequent, short study periods** produce better results than “cramming.”
2. **Review previous sections a little each day.** Try making an index card file of rules, procedures, formulas, strategies, steps, etc. Make reviewing fun by “shuffling the deck” of index cards and “dealing them out” to see whether or not you can recall the information.
3. **Neatly write out every step** of the problem. If our work is a mess, so is the visual input that is provided to the brain.
4. **After practicing a problem,** ask mom, dad, or a friend to check the process. If your process is wrong, the more you practice the incorrect steps the harder it will be learn the correct method.
5. **Practice as much as possible.** Just watching the teacher do the problem, does not develop your ability to do the process. Learning cannot be thought of as a “spectator sport.”
6. **Talk to your teacher the next day** regarding any questions you might have had from the previous day or last night’s homework. The quicker you understand the process, the better you will be for learning the next standard.
7. **Find a study partner.** It’s always easier to solve problems when someone else is there to work at it with you. Research has found that students who study in groups perform better than those who study alone.
8. **Label and date your notes.** Do the same with your homework.