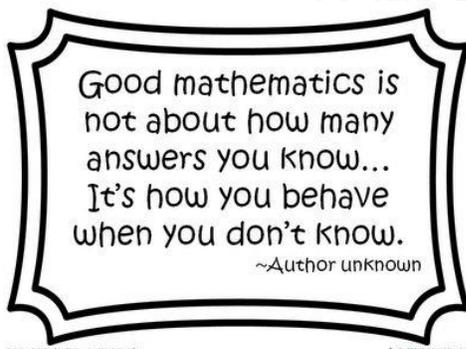


GAMES AND TIPS TO BUILD MATH SKILLS AT HOME

First and foremost, keep it fun!

How do you feel about math? Does math make you feel uneasy or excited? Do you avoid math at all costs or jump right in? Enthusiasm is infectious and so is an **open, positive attitude about math**. Help your child be receptive to math by keeping conversations about math positive. Have you ever made a comment that makes math ability sound like an inherited trait? Foster the understanding in your children that **everyone is a 'math person'** and the more they practice, the better they will get. Reassure your child that **making mistakes is okay, as long as we learn from them**. We rarely make mistakes when we attempt problems we already know how to solve, but in trying more challenging tasks we may need to try multiple attempts before we find a strategy that works. **Never underestimate your child's ability to do math!**

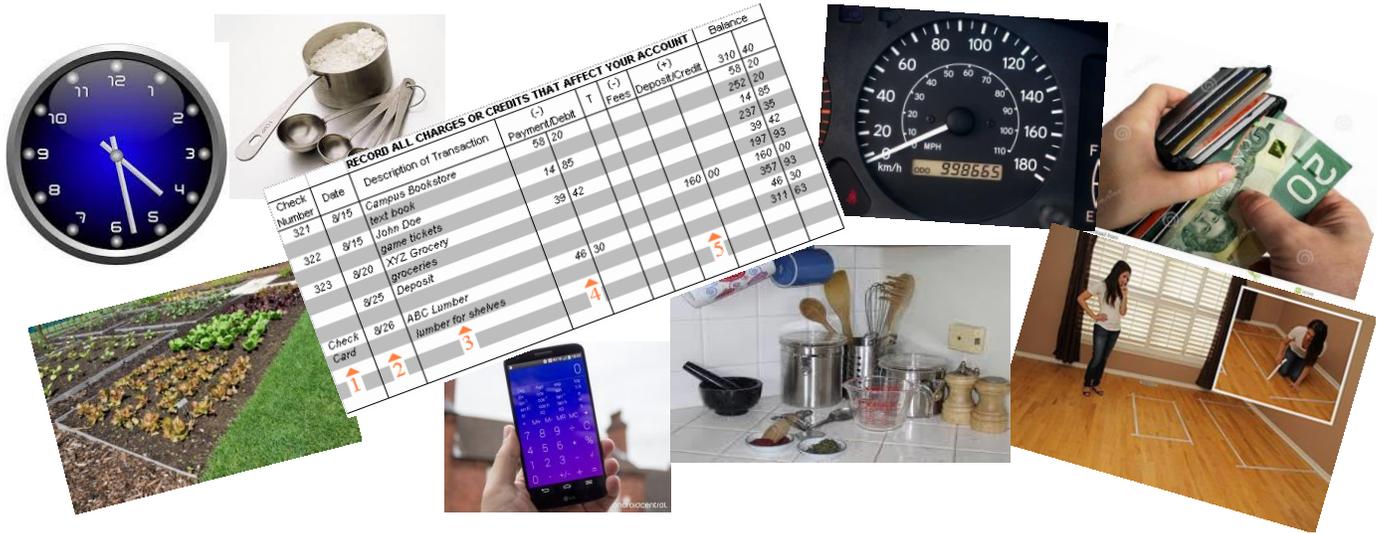
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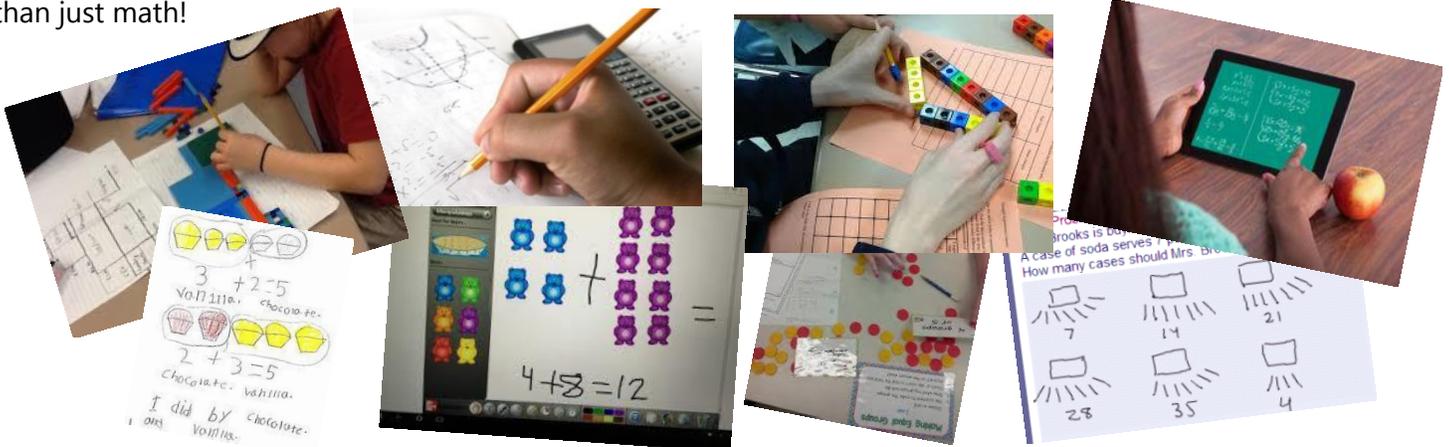
Want to build number recognition, counting and computational skills? **Play games:** card games, dice games, Dominoes, board games. Learning a new math skill can be as simple as changing the way you count during hide-and-go-seek, which can help with counting by 5's, 10's, 2's, and don't forget counting backwards. Playing Yahtzee helps build addition and multiplication facts. Playing Dominoes helps children recognize values without having to count and builds addition facts. Let your child be the banker in Monopoly to practice adding and subtracting money. Not only do games **build needed math skills** and **encourage problem solving**, they also help children understand that **math is meant to be fun!**



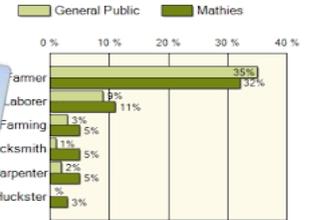
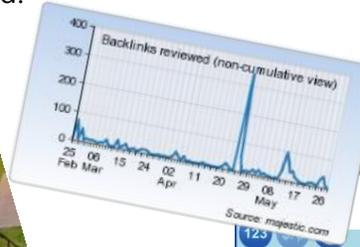
Connecting math to everyday life will help your child realize that **math is everywhere**. Cooking is a great place to discuss measurement and fractions; try changing the recipes by doubling and halving. Playing with toys in the sandbox or in the tub is a great place to teach concepts like weight, density and volume. Making a quick trip to the store? Have your child help out by keeping an estimate of how much money the items in the cart total, or practice using a calculator to keep track of the total. When you are planning a trip, give your children a 'family activity budget' to work with. Let them research activities and the costs involved. Can they combine activities that work within the budget? When you use **real world examples** to build math skills **the learning is authentic and meaningful** and will help your child understand how **math influences everyone**.



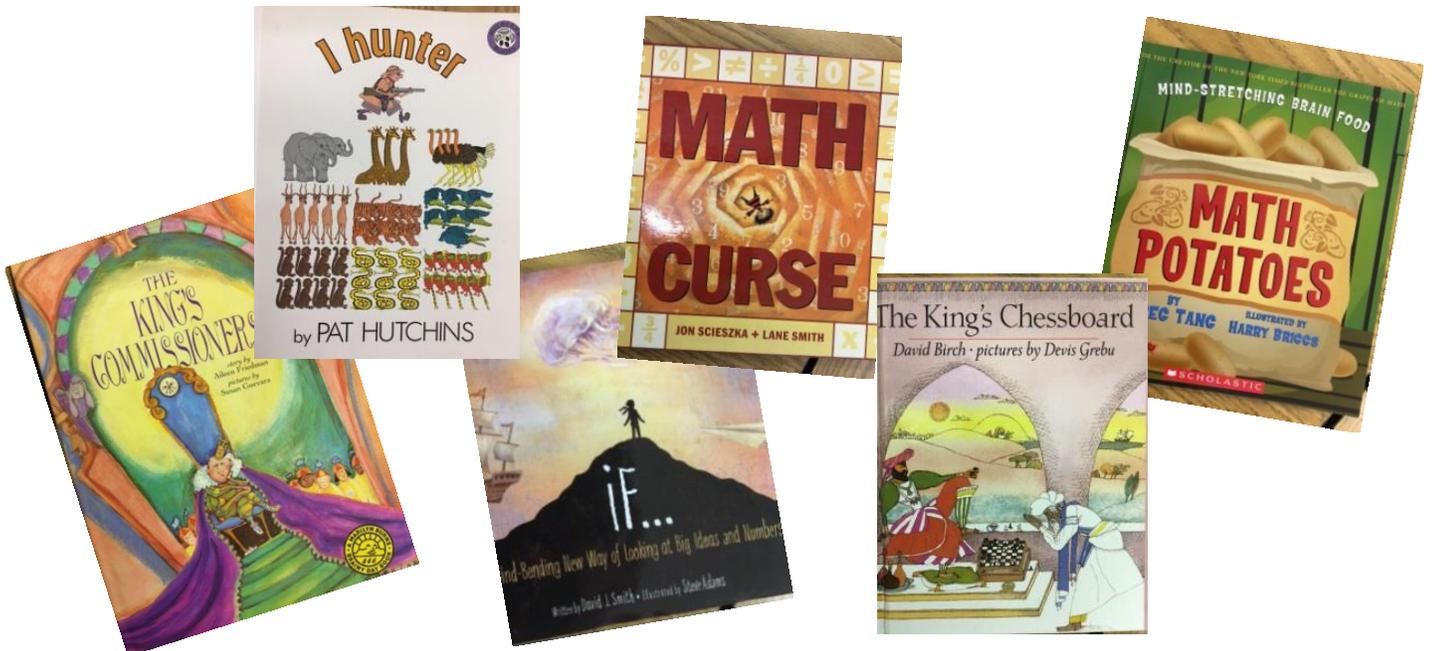
When your child asks questions involving math, **encourage your child to solve the problem**. Turn it around and ask them how they could figure it out. If you are traveling and you hear, "How much longer?" Instead of answering, tell them how long the trip takes and how long you've been traveling so far and then ask them, "How much longer?" **Model problem solving** by thinking out loud when you are using your math skills; let your child 'hear' what you are thinking and the process you use to work through the problem. Encourage your child to experiment with **different ways to find a solution**. Can they act it out, draw a picture, model it, create a table or graph or solve it mentally? Provide assistance if needed, but promote the understanding that **problem solving takes time and persistence**. Foster good communication skills by asking questions that will help explain their mathematical thinking and reasoning (e.g. Does the answer make sense? How do you know? Will this strategy work for similar problems?) **Problem solving and perseverance are life skills** that they will need in more areas than just math!



Children love time on the computer, so why not **use computer time to help build math concepts while having fun**? One example is **Prodigy** (<https://www.prodigygame.com/>). It is an engaging, effective math site that children love. **Mathies** (<http://oame.on.ca/mathies/siteMap.html>) is a site supported by the Ministry of Education and was designed for Ontario K-12 students and their parents. It not only has math games, but also tools that can be used to work through problems. Does your child want to have something extra for their presentation? Encourage him or her to use technology to create charts, graphs, maps and spreadsheets to support the information being presented.



Don't forget to read books that promote math thinking!



Please contact Michelle George at migeorge@tncdsb.on.ca if you are looking for games or activities that promote math concepts or if you have questions in regards to building math skills at home.