

## How to Help Your Child Make Sense of Math

*YOU are your child's first teacher and role model.*

*Be positive about mathematics and your child's need and ability to make sense of it.*

- 1) **Tell your child about the math in your life and on your job.**
  - Count the apples when you are grocery shopping.
  - Look for and identify different shapes when driving (e.g., stop sign—octagon, window-rectangle).
  - Show how you measure for a new rug.
  - Describe the pattern in the quilt you are sewing (e.g., yellow, blue, green, yellow, blue, green, ...).
- 2) **Encourage mental math and estimating in everyday situations.**
  - I have \$5 and buy something that costs \$3.90. About how much change should I get?
  - My car gets 20 miles/gallon and I have about 2 gallons left. How far until I run out of gas?
- 3) **Make sure your child has a space and some supplies to do the math work/games (paper, pencils, small objects to use as counters, a ruler, dice, a deck of cards).**
- 4) **Ask your child questions about math work (or games) and patiently listen to their responses:**
  - What do you need to find out?
  - Where can you begin?
  - How can you explain your thinking?
  - Why did you . . .?
  - How did you get that answer?
  - Tell me more.
  - Is there another strategy that would work?
- 5) **Help your child learn the basic facts (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division).**
  - Addition and subtraction by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade (up to 9+9).
  - Multiplication and division by the end of 4<sup>th</sup> grade (up to 10x10).
  - Focus on strategies and accuracy, NOT speed!
  - One way to practice the facts is to use fact triangles (e.g., 4, 5, & 9; 4+5=9, 5+4=9, 9-4=5, 9-5=4).
  - Use the Nancy Nutting materials to learn and practice the strategies. Play her games and have fun learning and practicing the math!
- 6) **Provide puzzles, tangrams, building toys (Legos), and other fun ways for your child to practice spatial visualization skills. Using spatial visualization skills helps one become a better problem solver.**
- 7) **Use the FAMILY MATH activities that are included in this website (or order FAMILY MATH book(s) from <https://equals.lhs.berkeley.edu/index.html>). FAMILY MATH encourages communication, involvement, and playful investigation in mathematics. Enjoy!**
- 8) **Play games that reinforce other math concepts (e.g., counting and reasoning; board games, checkers, chess, card games).**

*Instill in your child the belief that they can succeed in mathematics  
and that hard work pays off  
and that making mistakes is a good thing – it is a way we learn!*