

In this BHS Math Department Newsletter October, 2008

Just in time for Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences!

1. Note from Mrs. Powell on Learning Math
2. **Help** your Child Achieve in Math – Article for parents
3. Other Websites for teachers, parents, and students

Helping Parents help their children achieve in math!

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My views... <http://www.district87.org/staff/powelln/Parents/default.htm>

Math is a subject that all students **CAN** learn and it will enhance their opportunities and their self esteem later in life. The Power of Mathematics opens doors to new knowledge and understanding. Math is not hereditary - there is no math gene (at least I don't know of any!). The worst thing any parent can tell their child is that they were "bad in math" and that they understand why they are having trouble. Do not make excuses for students. If you do, their expectations (and yours) cost some children their math education. Everyone needs math to understand the world around them and make sound decisions on the future using probability and statistics. **Encourage your child. Expect nothing but the best! Believe that they can do math!**

The tough part of math is the practice required to learn it well. But, let's put it in perspective... Would a basketball coach put a player on the floor that didn't show up to practice? Did Michael Jordan get good at basketball by watching other players play? Why should math be any different? **Math takes practice** - 30-45 minutes per night is not expecting too much (a basketball practice is often a couple of hours per afternoon!). In the preparation for life, **math should have a high priority**, right?

Technology is changing the job market. No longer will there be jobs for students without mathematical reasoning skills. Students will not only have to **do** math but they will also have to **communicate** math and **work together** to solve problems. Jobs are being redefined. Employers are looking for a new kind of employee. Once students reach the job market more and more of them will have to create their own job and market their own skills. Downsizing is beginning to make this a reality today. I read a good book - *The Monster Under the Bed* by Stan Davis and Jim Botkin and it helped me to see the future in a new way.

Below are some additional sources (in no particular order) that I've found that might give you some good information as parents. I will continue to update this list to provide you with the best tools to be the best parent. Please feel free to **e-mail me at powelln@district87.org with ideas, questions, or comments about mathematics or about this site.**

- [Things what we've learned about teaching our children math](#)
- [5 Ways To Make Teaching Your Child Math Easier](#) by Adam O'Connor
- [Teaching Math One Step at a Time](#)
- [Helping Your Child Learn Math](#)
- [Homework Help](#) - link to free homework help on the Internet
- [The Public School Parent's Network](#) - a lot of good information including national assessment info
- [How To Teach Math To A Kid With Add/adhd](#)
- [Help your student learn math skills](#)

Help Your Child Achieve in Math

■ **Visit your child's school.** Meet with your child's teacher to see if your child is actively involved in math. Find out how you can help your child to better understand math problems.

■ **Set high standards for your child in math.** Make sure your child is mathematically challenged and encourage his or her interest and pursuit of math. By the end of the 10th grade, your child should be expected to have studied algebra and geometry.

■ **Help children see that math is very much a part of everyday life.** From statistics in sports to the sale price of clothing, from the calories in food to the amount of gas needed to travel from one city to another, math is important to us every day. Help your child make these connections to math.

■ **Point out that many jobs require math.** From the scientist to the doctor, from the plant manager to the newspaper salesman, from the computer programmer to the hardware store owner, many jobs require a strong foundation in math. Help your child see that math leads to many exciting career opportunities.

■ **Stimulate your child's interest in technology.** Encourage your child to use calculators and computers to further learning.

■ **Play games that help children develop decision making and mental math skills.** There are many games sold commercially, such as board games, that involve patterns and probability. Play games from your own family traditions such as counting games and games that keep score. Try schoolyard games such as jump rope, hopscotch, and jacks. Games require children to use strategies to make decisions, solve problems, and develop an understanding about numbers and how to use them (number sense) and computational skills.

■ **Positive attitudes about math will reinforce encouragement.** Your feelings will have an impact on how your children think about math and themselves as mathematicians. Positive attitudes about math are important in encouraging your child to think mathematically.

Parent Pointer

! Remember, healthy kids learn better. There are new opportunities to get free or low-cost health insurance coverage for children who are under age 19. Your state may have a new Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for families with low and moderate incomes, including working families. For more information, call toll-free: 1-877-KIDS-NOW.

Web Sites

<http://www.math.com/parents/articles/helpmath.html>

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Helping your Child Learn Math

With activities for children aged 5 through 13

By Patsy F. Kanter

http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/Content/learnmath_index.html

<http://childparenting.about.com/od/learningenrichment/a/mathskills.htm>

Children need many experiences with math concepts to develop their skills in the elementary years. Parents can help at home with these ideas to teach math reasoning and increase their child's math problem solving skills.

Don't turn your kids off by 'teaching' them math. A better idea is to provide experiences for 'playing and living' math. Take time to play the homework games your child will bring home from [Connected Math](#). 'New' Math gives parents the chance to learn along with their child. You will be surprised at how effective these activities are in teaching math thinking. [Find several of these games online](#). They can be made from simple materials you have at home.

<http://www.goarticles.com/cgi-bin/showa.cgi?C=297933>

-- Set the following expectation for your child: Do only what makes sense to you. Too often, children see math as a collection of steps and tricks they must learn. Help them understand that they must always try to make sense of what they do in math. Always encourage them to explain the purpose of what they're doing, the logic of their procedures, and the reasonableness of their solutions.

-- Identify what your child should know and be able to do. Children who are ready for algebra by eighth grade are much more likely to succeed later on than those who are not, and these children are doing about as well as students in the most successful countries. The clearest and most explicit mathematics standards were recently adopted in California.

-- Your home is full of opportunities to explore math with your child and, at the same time, build his or her self-confidence and understanding of mathematical ideas. You can use the measuring cups in your kitchen to teach fractions, or you can cut out grocery store coupons and have your child figure out how much money you're saving.

-- Teaching your child to do math the way you learned it as a kid could confuse her, but don't back off completely. To help without teaching, show sympathy. Say things like "that looks tough," and "I know it's hard," when your child is frustrated. Ask questions such as "what is the problem asking you to do?" If they hit a roadblock, offer an alternative activity for awhile, like an [educational science toy](#), then get back to it.

-- Studies have shown a positive effect between early musical training and brain development. It has been suggested that musical training can have a positive effect on a child's academic achievement, especially in the area of mathematics.

Article by: Adam O'Connor, [Unique Educational Toys](#)