

Understanding and Supporting Your Child’s Math Development





Families and caregivers play an important role in helping students grow as math learners. This resource shares practical tips for supporting your children’s math learning at home.

Families can support math in the language their child uses most at home. In grades 4–8, students learn through “productive struggle,” or working through challenging problems with support.



Math Milestones: What Children Learn in Math Each Year

This table gives an overview of key math learning goals for each grade. It highlights skills in four major areas: *number sense*, *operations and problem solving*, *measurement and data*, and *geometry*. As students progress, they begin using math in more complex ways, including explaining their thinking and solving multi-step problems. Math skills grow over time, and progress looks different for every child.

	4th Grade	5th Grade	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
 <p>Number Sense The ability to understand numbers and how they relate to each other</p>	Compare numbers to see which is greater or smaller and explain why	Compare, round, and use decimals in real life	Understand fractions, decimals, and positive and negative numbers	Understand how numbers change when you multiply or divide them	Work with very large and very small numbers, like numbers used in science and technology
 <p>Operations and Problem Solving The ability to solve math problems and understand patterns</p>	Add and subtract multi-digit numbers	Add, subtract, multiply, and divide whole numbers and decimals	Write and solve simple equations	Use proportions and percentages in everyday situations	Understand relationships between two changing values, like the relationship between time and distance
 <p>Measurement and Data The ability to measure, compare, and analyze data</p>	Read and talk about information shown in charts and graphs	Convert measurements (inches to feet, minutes to hours)	Use graphs to make sense of information	Use statistics to compare groups and make predictions	Use data to make comparisons and support conclusions
 <p>Geometry The ability to recognize and describe shapes and how they fit together</p>	Identify angles and straight lines in shapes and everyday objects	Understand shapes, angles, and volume	Find area and volume of different shapes	Solve problems involving area and surface area	Understand how shapes can move (flip, turn, slide) and still stay the same

Questions to Ask Your Child's Teacher

You can work with your child's teacher to learn practical ways to support math development throughout the year.



Your Child's Math Progress

1. Math looks different than when I was in school. What is my child learning right now? Can you show me an example of their work?
2. Does my child share ideas and participate during math lessons?
3. Is my child on track in math for their grade level?
 - If not, what help or support is available at school?
 - If my child is performing above grade level, what programs are available to challenge them?
4. Can you tell me more about the school or district tests that my child will take during the year? What do these test scores mean for my child?



Ways to Support Your Child

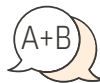
1. What are simple things I can do at home to help my child with math?
2. Are there games, activities, or websites you recommend?
3. How can I help my child feel confident about math, even when it feels hard?
4. What questions can I ask my child to help them explain their thinking?
5. How can I tell if my child understands the math they are learning?
6. How can I support homework without giving the answers?
7. What can we do at home to help my child prepare for math tests?

Ways to Support Your Child's Math Development at Home and in Your Community



Create Math Routines

- Set aside a regular time each week to check in about math assignments, goals, or skills they are practicing.
- Encourage effort and persistence. Let your child know that challenging problems help build strong thinking skills.
- Talk about math in any language. Thinking about and explaining ideas in your home language strengthens understanding.
- Use simple materials at home – like paper, pencils, coins, or measuring tools – to practice math skills.



Make Math Connections

- If you don't understand the math, that's okay. Listening, asking questions, and showing interest helps your child learn.
- Watch educational videos, explore math websites, or read articles together. Talk about graphs, data, or real-world problems.
- Use math in everyday life. Ask your child to help with things like budgeting money, comparing prices, doubling recipes or cutting them in half, tracking sports statistics, or planning travel time.
- Visit libraries, museums, or community events where students can explore science, technology, and math in hands-on ways.



Talk About Math

- Ask your child to explain their thinking. You can say, "How did you figure that out?" or "Why does that strategy work?"

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WestEd's Family Engagement Services team helps educators and families work together to improve children's learning.