

# Help your child succeed in math

Math is more than coming up with the right answer

For students in grades 3 to 5

**Problem-solving is an important component of mathematics.** It is more than finding answers to word problems. Problem-solving helps your child to show his understanding of mathematics and builds new mathematical knowledge. It is the vehicle through which your child will develop mathematical ideas.

Problem-solving helps your child to build skills that can be applied in other situations. When your child is solving problems, she is learning how to break problems up into smaller parts, make plans and judge the effectiveness of those plans, select tools to accomplish the plan, and prove and share her ideas.

## Use these strategies with your child

There are many ways to solve a problem. Use one or more of these strategies to help your child to solve a problem:

- make a list
- draw a diagram
- make a model
- guess and check
- find all the combinations
- simplify the problem
- use your own strategy \_\_\_\_\_

It is important that these problem-solving strategies are talked about as well as practiced. Encouraging your child to explain his plan for solving problems helps to develop mathematical language and reasoning.

## Ask questions to guide your child

Here are some questions to help you guide your child when working together on a problem:

- *What are the key words in the problem and do we know what they mean?*
- *What strategy should we try first?*
- *Will \_\_\_\_\_ (suggest a strategy) help us to find a solution?*
- *What materials or tools should we use?*
- *How can we record our thinking?*
- *Is our strategy working?*
- *Have we found all the possible solutions?*
- *Is there a pattern in the answers we found?*
- *Have we clearly shown how we solved the problem and explained our thinking?*

*Have we used mathematical language?*

## Provide these materials for problem-solving activities

Choosing the right tools is part of solving a problem. Your child should have access to these materials at home:

- calculator
- counters or manipulatives
- ruler and measuring tape in centimeters
- multiplication chart

- protractor
- compass

### **Helpful Websites**

#### **Math Online**

<http://mathonline.peelschools.org>

This website provides help with homework and information for parents and students.

#### **ConnectMe**

<http://educ.queensu.ca/connectme/>

This site is maintained by teacher candidates at Queen's University. The daily math calendar is particularly useful for parents.

#### **Esso Family Math**

[http://www.edu.uwo.ca/essofamilymath/](http://www.edu.uwo.ca/essofamilymath/index.html)

[index.html](http://www.edu.uwo.ca/essofamilymath/index.html) This website from the University of Western Ontario, helps schools run family math programs. The activities listed in their materials are practical tips for math at home.

#### **Link to Learning**

<http://www.linktolearning.com> This site, created by a teacher, is organized by subject area. The math sites are arranged by strand and easy to navigate.