How can parents help their children be enthusiastic about mathematics? What is the mathematical equivalent of reading out loud to children every day? How can teachers support parents in doing mathematics with their children in engaging and productive ways?

Ongoing parental involvement in mathematics—as in any subject—can provide a solid foundation for children's learning and attitudes (Peressini 1998; Mokros 1996; Apelman and King 1993). When parents maintain high expectations for their children's performance in mathematics, regularly do mathematical activities with their children, and display a positive attitude toward mathematics, children benefit. They are more likely to feel confident in their abilities; to enjoy and learn more from the mathematics that they experience at school; and to develop a sense of the richness, usefulness, and pervasiveness of mathematics.

This article offers ideas to help parents integrate mathematics into their family lives in ways that are consistent with the NCTM's Standards (NCTM 1989). These ideas were gathered from teachers in a wide range of school settings. As teachers made changes in their mathematics teaching, they kept parents informed and enlisted their support. They let parents know what was happening in class and asked them to help with homework. Some teachers also encouraged families to do mathematics together regularly and experience mathematics as an engaging family activity.

Getting Started

To succeed in integrating mathematics into daily family life, parents need to understand how doing mathematics at home can foster children's learning, and they need appealing and manageable activity ideas. The following paragraphs offer some suggestions for teachers to help parents get started.

Begin early in the year

Launch the idea of doing mathematics at home near the start of the school year so that parents have plenty of time to try a range of activities, to share ideas with one another, and to reflect on their children's mathematics learning at home and at school. A parent night or conference is an ideal time to introduce the idea; if that idea is not possible, send a letter home. In one district, the mathematics coordinator sent a letter to parents about a month after school began, explaining the importance of regularly doing mathematics at home and offering a few activities for families to try. Teachers followed up in their classrooms with activity ideas and resource lists sent home throughout the year.

Draw a connection to the family's role in literacy

Most parents are familiar with the importance of reading to their children regularly; teachers may find it helpful to draw a parallel between supporting children's literacy and mathematics at home. Ask parents to consider the ways that they support their children's reading and writing throughout the day and give some typical examples. For instance, many parents point out familiar words on package labels to beginning readers, listen while their children read aloud, encourage their children to write thank-you notes, and make up stories and rhymes with their children. Explain that encouraging children's mathematics skills is similar to encouraging their language skills. Just as many opportunities...

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Learn about homework help, and how to help your kid succeed in school. Find out everything you need to know about parenting. Parents.com. But those extra minutes and hours logged at home can help your kid get a leg up in the classroom. Here, the case for homework and how to help your kid succeed. Most Recent. Major Study Links Using Smartphones for School Work With Lower Grades. Major Study Links Using Smartphones for School Work With Lower Grades. Wait; homework isn't helping our kids do better in school? Then, um, why are they doing so much of it?! Read More. 5 Things Not to Say to Your Child About Homework. 5 Things Not to Say to Your Child About Homework. Use these small tweaks to inspire rather than incite your child when it comes to homework. Autumn Raubuck helped her sons with homework in their home in Long Beach, N.Y. Yana Paskova for The New York Times. Sociologists at the University of Texas at Austin and Duke University have found that parental involvement, including homework help, can have a negative effect on a child’s academic achievement. As parents fret to give their children the tools to be successful in the future, are they doing more harm than good? Is parental involvement out of control? Read the Discussion ». Debaters. Help With Forming Good Study Habits. Erika A. Patall, University of Texas. When kids feel like home... Parental help with homework definitely helps a child to understand specific concepts in a better way. However, there are always two sides to a coin. As you can see, there are some advantages and well as disadvantages of guiding your child in their academic tasks. Research suggests that students spend more time on their homework when parents show active involvement in their academic tasks. US Department of Education’s Office of Educational Research and Improvement state that homework help is not only a mere chance for the parents to review the student’s learning at school. Parental involvement becomes crucial for a child’s growth and development due to various reasons. It provides an opportunity to cultivate student-parent relationship. Beyond Helping with Homework: Parents and Children Doing Mathematics at Home. Article. Jan 1999. Marlene Kliman. Offers ideas for helping parents do mathematics with their children as part of everyday family life in ways that are consistent with the National Council Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Standards. (Contains 11 references.) (ASK). View. Show abstract. Sharing Problem Posing and Problem Solving at Home through Diary Writing. Article. Jan 2000. Susan Leung. Rui-Xiang Wu. Presents a project in which grade 1 children use diary writing as a link between home and school. Describes how they