

2/26/09

Principal's Corner

Next week, the children in grades 3-5 will take the New York State Mathematics Assessments. Children in grade 6 will take the assessments the following week.

As parents, you can help your child develop skills and a positive attitude toward mathematics by showing him/her the importance of math in everyday life. You can involve your child in mathematical thinking, such as deciding if he should buy a particular item ("How much would you have left?"), estimating how long it will take to make a trip ("If we're driving an average of 50 miles per hour and the trip is 300 miles..."), calculating the tip in a restaurant ("The bill is \$40, and 10% would be \$4, so to get 20% we would double that..."), or doubling the ingredients of a recipe. ($2\frac{1}{2}$ cups + $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups = ...) Try having your child estimate the total of your hotel bill, or give her a calculator and have her add up the costs of a vacation. Ask her to figure out what time a movie will end. ("It's 6:15 now, and the movie is $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours long...") Have your child use a ruler or tape measure to help you center a picture before hanging it on the wall or have him do the measuring of ingredients as you follow a recipe. Notice how you use math every day and include your child in the mathematical thinking you do.

Another way to promote mathematical thinking is through games. My children loved *Yahtzee* (multiplication and addition), *Chess* (strategy and visualization) and *Multiplication War*. (Use two decks of cards. Each player lays down two cards and multiplies them. The player with the greatest product wins all four cards.) Today, there are great games on the market. A quick Internet search led me to two that look pretty good: *Head Full of Numbers* and *4-Way Countdown*. Of course there are many others, and there are also dozens of computer games that will help your child develop visual-spatial skills, strategic thinking, and even learn his multiplication facts!

Once you start noticing the many times each day you calculate, estimate, and measure, you'll find your own ways to share math with your child. The idea is to help him/her know that math is important... and fun!

Enjoy!

Yours,

Mrs. Herschlein