

A Homework guide for Parents

... Helping at Home ...

Parents often ask how they can best help their children with mathematics. First of all, do not fall into 'their' trap! Students many times want the answer(s) 'spoon fed' to them. When you are really tired or just to get them away from you, at times you might be tempted to quickly 'tell-show' your children 'how' to do the math even if you want your children to figure it out for themselves. Be careful, some children **will** come to '**depend**' on you '**thinking**' for **them**!

You can help 'them' develop their 'logic skills' as well as 'guide' your children **without telling them what to do** simply by **asking questions**. Good questions and good listening will help your children make sense of the mathematics, build confidence, and encourage mathematical thinking and communication.

It is important that a **daily** home- work **schedule** be followed by your child. Your child needs **your consistent monitoring** [accountability] that the work is being attempted, completed, revised, and submitted for assessment and feedback.

When it is time for your child to do homework, there should be;

- * No distractions,
- * Ample lighting,
- * Needed materials available,
- * Ample working space.

When your child is not sure how to start or continue, I suggest that you follow the following script of questions that will guide your child's thinking.

A. Getting Started

- * What do you know now?
- * In your words, what is the problem saying? What is it asking you to do?
- * What information is important?
- * What information can you discard?
- * What do you need to find out?
- * What missing information is needed?
- * How might you begin?
- * Have you seen other similar problems?
- * Can you simplify the problem? Can you make it easier with smaller numbers?
- * What assumption(s) will you need to make? What is an assumption?

B. While Working

- * How can you organize your information? [Chart? List? Matrix?]
- * Can you make a model [drawing] to explain your thinking?
- * What would happen if ... ?
- * What do you need to do next?
- * Do you see any patterns?
- * Do you see any relationships?
- * Why did you do ... ?
- * Can you make a prediction?
- * What assumptions are you making?
- * Explain to me the steps that you are using and why?
- * What do you need to do next?

C. Reflection

- * Is your solution [conclusion] reasonable? Can it be checked?
- * How do you know? Explain thoroughly.
- * What did you try that did not work?
- * What did you learn?
- * What new insight(s) do you now have about yourself?
- * What unanswered question(s) do you have? What step(s) will you take in order to discover the answers?