



KAWARTHA PINE RIDGE  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## Building Math Skills at Home

A guide for parents and guardians



- When something doesn't add up, ask your children to help you with your calculations. Playing around with a calculator can be a valuable learning experience. Let your children see that sometimes, you have to try again to get something right.

You can start your child off on the right foot in math by using many items you have in your own home to sort and count. As you move around your home, yard or neighbourhood, keep your eyes open for ways to point out math to your children. Your children will be better math-wise, and so will you!

- Let your children look at food boxes to see which cereal has the lowest amount of sugar or fat.
- On the way home, compare gas prices to see the best deal. When you help your children notice prices in their neighbourhood, it prepares them to be careful shoppers and to pay attention to math in their world.
- If you need to determine how much paint or wallpaper you need to decorate a room, invite your children to help you figure it out.
- Let your child make purchases, and count the change to make sure it is correct.



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**Y**ou are your child's first math teacher. Teaching skills and positive attitudes about mathematics at home will prepare your child for the more formal math lessons at school. This pamphlet outlines a few ways you can help your children with math at home – and make it fun.

### The math all around us

Numbers, shapes and patterns are the building blocks of math. It is surprising how often we see and use them without even thinking about it. Notice the math around you on:

- numbers on your house or mailbox
- clocks and watches
- TV remote controls
- books
- recipes
- price tags or receipts
- sizes of shoes or clothing
- food packaging
- signs
- calendars
- shapes.

### How can I use math in the home?

Here are a few household situations to help young children learn and recognize numbers:

- Count as you pile blocks or sort toys.
- Talk about numbers as you use the TV remote control to flip between channels or tape a favourite program.
- Count sets of items as you set or clear the table.
- Count the number of parts of an apple as you cut it up for sharing, or share an even number of cookies with friends.
- Play math games with the whole family. Board games help young children recognize numbers on dice, count along as they move their game piece, and learn their numbers. For older children, card and board games are a great way to practise matching, counting and planning strategies. Try Checkers, Crazy Eights, Fish, and Snakes and Ladders.
- Enjoy math as you read. The illustrations in many stories often include patterns and shapes to talk about.



### How else can I make mathematics fun?

Once your child becomes familiar with numbers and counting, there are many opportunities to further develop math skills both in the home and in the community:

- Ask your child to help you prepare family meals. Following recipes requires measurements and following written instructions about math.
- Ask your child to solve math problems. For example: "I can eat two hot dogs. If all four of us want two hot dogs, how many do we need to cook?"
- Keep a large calendar handy where children can see it and post appointments and special days. This will help your children get used to using an agenda to keep track of their assignments.
- When you are checking newspaper flyers for prices, talk about what you find and ask your children to help make the grocery list.
- In the grocery store, ask your children to help you find the item with the lowest or highest price. Talk about the quantities of different items or their weight.