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5 Ways To Help Your Kids Do Math

Your kids arrive home with their school reports and it's poor marks from the math department. Now what do you do? You may not be a math teacher, but thankfully there are ways you can help your kids improve their grades. Studies have shown that children are much more likely to perform well in a subject that interests them. So here are 5 ways to get your kids excited about math and actually looking forward to the next math class: 1. Inspire them. Some kids don't enjoy math because they just can't see the point of it. Unlike reading or painting, all those mathematical symbols and numbers don't seem to mean anything. What you need to do is show them how important math is in the real world. Tell them stories about the great engineering feats throughout history. From building the great pyramids of Egypt, to the Hoover dam, to the latest space missions to Mars, nothing would have been achieved without mathematics, and mathematicians. 2. Get practical. Involve your kids in some real world math away from the classroom. Find something your child is interested in and relate it to math in some way. For example, do they like baseball? Terrific. During a game, ask them how many points the losing team has to score to beat the other one. And how many games do they need to win before they have enough points to win the league? If they enjoy helping around the home then let them do the "clever stuff". Ask them to work out the sizes for that wood you're going to cut. Or get them to measure out the ingredients for the cake you're about to bake. When you're in a store, ask your kids to add up the prices and keep a running total while you shop. Then ask them how much change you should expect at the checkout. 3. Take life "step-by-step". Success in math - as in life - is largely about breaking large projects down into manageable, bite-sized pieces. Many kids feel overwhelmed when they see a list of math questions, and it's at this point they may decide that math is "boring" or "hard". Show them the magic of taking one question at a time, and breaking it into tiny steps that make it easy. 4. Encourage creativity. Kids may become mentally "stuck" on a topic because they're only looking at it in one way. Perhaps they need to step outside the box and see it from a different angle. Show them the beauty of alternative viewpoints. Help them to see situations from other people's perspective. Get them into the habit of exploring different ways of solving a problem. Even something simple like tidying up a room can have several possible "solutions" or ways of approaching it. Crosswords and lateral thinking puzzles are good for this kind of flexible thinking. 5. Be positive. Eliminate negative statements like "math is hard" (even if you thought of yourself as a math dunce at school!). Explain how everyone has a natural ability to do math and that solving math problems isn't so different from solving other kinds of problems in life. Above all, inspire confidence in your kids. Teach them persistence and how there's always a solution to every problem.

----- We all perform better when we enjoy what we do, and getting kids interested in math is the real key to success. They may not turn into mathematical geniuses, but they'll thank you in later life when they enter the world of work and start counting their salaries. Now who said your kids couldn't do math?

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