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Description automatically generated with medium confidenceMath Moments at Home

**Tip Sheet**



**What to do:** Find ways to share math experiences with your child as a part of your daily activities. This will help them to see that math is part of their everyday experiences.

**Why it matters:** Sharing math experiences helps you connect with your child and create positive math moments! These moments add up to help your child overcome fears and negativeideas like “Math is boring” and “It’s too hard.” They also help your child:

* **Build life skills** like sticking to it, trying different things, and seeking help if they need it.
* **Discover** that math can be interesting, useful, and fun!
* **Feel good** about math and their ability to learn it.
* **See** **the purpose** of math in daily experiences.
* **Build confidence** with positive math experiences that help to overcome anxiety and “rewire” their brain to more proactive thoughts.

# To Encourage and Support Your Child …

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Say This**  **Faster isn’t smarter.**  **How did you figure that out?**  **There are many ways to be good at math.**  **Math builds mental muscle!**  **Mistakes are learning opportunities.**  **Boys and girls are capable of learning math.** | **Do This** |

# Opportunities to Share Math With Your Child

**Cooking and baking:** Think of cooking and baking as a tasty math lab! Children learn to measure, get exposure to fractions, and learn equivalences such as 2/4 = 1/2. They might also use multiplication if they need to double a recipe, or division if a recipe needs to be cut down.

**Food:** Once the cooking or baking is completed, it’s time to eat! Grouping skills and division come into focus as children figure out how many pieces of pizza per person, or separate a dozen cookies into equal groups.

**Measurement:** In addition to measuring in the kitchen, children can measure things around the house. And they don’t even need a ruler or a yardstick — paper clips, pennies, pencils, hands, feet — almost any object can be used. Older children can try measuring the square footage of their room, the yard, or other areas around the house.

**Gardening:** Measurement shows up here, too! Seeds are often planted in evenly spaced rows. In math these are called arrays, and they help to visualize a number in different ways (2 rows of 10, 10 columns of 2, and so on).

**Estimation:** This can be done in lots of ways. Estimate how many steps you take on your walk, how many people are at the pool, or how many jellybeans are in the package.

**Telling time:** Children must get up at a certain time and need a certain number of minutes to get ready for the bus. The ride to school takes a specified time, and so on. Knowing how much time it takes for dance class or baseball practice, and estimating the time for other activities, are important skills to develop. Encourage your children to use a calendar so they know how many days until their birthday or how many weeks until school is out!

**Money, budgeting, and finance:** If your children get an allowance or earn money for chores, help them make responsible decisions about saving and spending. Involve older children in family financial discussions as appropriate (the cost-benefit calculation of a new TV vs. a new couch, or the best value for a family activity). Shopping is a great way to expose younger children to the value of various coins, as well as counting money and making change.

****Traveling:** Children can calculate mileage, distance traveled, traveling speed, or arrival time.

**Patterns and shapes:** Look for these everywhere in nature, at the store, and in your neighborhood.

**Playing sports and games:** Most games involve some type of math. Keeping score, counting to move a certain number of spaces, adding two dice, recognizing the numbers on cards, and counting Monopoly money all build math skills.

# What If Your Child Avoids Math?

Does your child …

* Avoid math-related activities?
* Dread math class?
* Say things like “I hate math” and “I’m no good at math”?
* Seem especially nervous when doing math homework?
* Get a stomachache or beg to stay home on days when there’s a math test?

If so, it’s possible that your child has math anxiety.

## What is math anxiety?

Math anxiety is a negative emotional reaction to math.

## Who gets math anxiety?

People of all ages and abilities can have math anxiety. Even students with good math grades can have it.

## How can I tell if my child has math anxiety?

If your child is struggling, the [American Psychological Association](https://www.apa.org/topics/anxiety/helping-kids-manage-math-anxiety) recommends talking with your child and also talking with your child’s teacher. The school may recommend an evaluation for learning disabilities such as dyscalculia, which impairs math ability. Math anxiety is more common than dyscalculia, but if your child does have a learning disability, knowing about it is the first step in making sure they get the support they need. Understanding, supporting, and advocating for your child is important to their success.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Math Anxiety: Five Ways It Can Affect Your Child | | | | |
| **Learning** | **Feelings** | **Beliefs** | **Behaviors** | **Career** |
| Disrupts working memory, which makes it hard to focus. | Causes worry and distress; may affect self-esteem. | Makes children believe they don’t like math and can’t learn it. | Leads to your child avoiding math activities and advanced classes. | May limit education and career options. |

*Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.*

*—* Robert Collier



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