

Tips and Tools for Parents

10 Tips to help your child with math: Tips for grades 4 to 6

1. **Connect math to daily life.** Let your kids know the importance of math in day-to-day living. Talk about the ways you use math in your job and around the house. Show them a tax form or how you pay the bills. Ask them how they used math during the day.
2. **Practise mental math using coins.** For example, show that a certain item costs a certain amount and ask what coins are needed to pay for it.
3. **Play games together.** Show them math can be fun and exciting. Play family games to add excitement to math activities, like chess or checkers or games in the car such as math bingo or adding licence plate numbers. Lots of board games need math such as *Junior Monopoly*® or play card games such as *Uno*®.
4. **Cooking can be counting fun!** Get older children involved in helping out at dinner time and let them help measure ingredients for dishes or estimate the number of potatoes that are needed to feed everyone.
5. **Play the estimating game.** Ask your kids to estimate measurements, distances, time and grocery bills. Be sure to compare the estimate with actual. Or get them to guess how much the apples you are going to buy will weigh and then take them to the scale in the grocery store and find out.
6. **Perform time calculations.** For example, make up a sentence and ask your child to recite it as many times as possible in 15 seconds. Then ask how many times it could be repeated in 1 minute, 5 minutes, 10 minutes, etc.
7. **Use common toys to understand math concepts.** Build a tower from blocks. Count the blocks. Then talk about the need for a base of the right size and the stability it creates.
8. **Sports and math.** There is a lot of math used in sports: batting averages, points per game, save percentages – these are math terms that a sports enthusiast will love. If you watch a game with your child, read the newspaper report together sometime the next day and talk about the math concepts.
9. **Computers + math = fun.** There are great computer games available for math—ask your librarian or check out your local computer store. Make sure they are "parent approved". There are also super websites that have fun math games, so do an Internet search for sites and bookmark them for future use.
10. **Measuring made easy.** Estimate and measure the area of different shapes. For example, use small square objects (plastic tiles, dice, etc.) to estimate then measure how many are needed to fill the area of various flat surfaces such as a magazine cover.

