

# 6 Ways to Make Math Meaningful

## Math Skills for School

- Number sense – Count forward and backwards
- Representation – objects, words, and pictures make ideas “real”
- Spatial sense – Shapes, size, position, direction, space
- Measurement – length, height, weight, time
- Estimation – bigger and smaller
- Patterns
- Problem solving



**We use math everyday so point it out!** Time, measurements, calendars, distance as well as how to figure out how much paint you'll need. You'll want to do the math on that one so someone doesn't have to make another run to the hardware store!



**Get to why!** Math is not about memorizing rules and doing rote drills – even if that is how you remember it yourself. Maybe you were the one with all the answers but did you really know why and how you got them? It is important for your child to understand mathematical concepts and not to just find the answer.



**Math skills in the kitchen are very important!** We need to follow recipes, measure correctly, and use a timer so things turn out like they should. Have your kids (or grandkids) help in the kitchen – including reading the ingredients list. Those younger set of eyes will be a help when your “readers” are not strong enough for the teeny-tiny print on those fractional amounts!



**Use cash for small purchases and let your child handle the money.** Many kids only see their parents pay for things with plastic or their phone. It's hard to develop a concept of money when you don't actually see it. Count out the exact amount of money needed with your child or count the change that the child gets back. This helps your child understand the idea that a larger bill can be broken into smaller bills and coins. But you probably do not want to give them a \$100 bill to pay for a couple hot dogs – the vendor will not be happy with you!



**Give your children an allowance and encourage them to save their money for things that they want.** Some parents start this very young but many wait until their children are in school. A typical amount is \$1 per week per year of age (a 10-year-old child would receive \$10 a week). The amount can be divided into three containers – save, spend, and give. There are two schools of thought about giving allowance: some do it for chores completed and others give unconditional allowance, but expect their children to participate in the daily chores of family life. Some families expect the allowance to be used for snacks at school or other regular expenses and may provide more than the \$1 per week.



**Help your child master basic math facts** – Flashcards and practice sheets can help your child remember facts which, when recalled automatically, free up working memory so your child can devote brain power to understanding math concepts. Explain this purpose to your child – it will help her do math problems faster and easier. But don't drill so much that the child is turned off to math – you might already know how that works!



**Bonus Tip: Provide help when your child needs it.** Math tutors can help your child to get on track. Math skills are cumulative so it is important to get the help needed before your child is too far behind.

Make sure that your child understands math concepts – otherwise math is just memorizing rules and rote drills. This is not understanding and can promote anxiety. Children look for “the answer” but do not understand the process. Math is cumulative so concepts build on one another. If your child has problems with math, even in early grades, a tutor can help to fill the gaps so they don't get bigger. Tutors can help when parents are not able.

Dr. Judie Harrington, an experienced college professor, elementary teacher, and reading teacher, provides the one-on-one attention that your child needs. Conveniently located, NRICH Tutoring has a comfortable environment as well as the resources for hands-on, minds-on learning.

**NRICH Tutoring Services, LLC**  
**1477 So. Knowles Ave., #210, New Richmond WI 54017**  
**715-246-0008      DrJ@nrichtutoring.com      NRICHtutoring.com**

All images and content – © Judith M. Harrington, Ph.D.