

Education News & Notes

Help Teach Teens: Math Counts Every Day



(NAPSA)—Many parents may admit math was not their favorite subject in high school. Many may also admit that math now plays an important role in their lives and careers—and will be necessary for their own children's futures.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, by 2014, 6.3 million jobs will require science, engineering or technical training—24 percent more than in 2004. These statistics show that today's middle and high school students will need a strong math background to be competitive in the job market.

Spending time with teens to make math relevant to them now can help them build strong math competencies to achieve success later. So how can parents engage their teens in math-focused activities that both can enjoy?

Here are tips to help parents capture their teens' and preteens' interest and make math matter in many ways, through encouragement, entertainment and empowerment.

Make It Real

Leading by example is a powerful influencer. Showing how math is used everyday can help teens understand its importance to their every day lives outside of the classroom. Are you cooking dinner tonight? Have your teen measure out the ingredients and ask questions on measurements if a recipe was doubled. Need to pay the bills? Have them do the math to calculate balances and budgets. Ready to purchase your teen's first car? Sit down with him or her to figure out financing, insurance rates, monthly gas expenses and maintenance costs.

Turn On The Television

Use examples from TV and movies to show how math can be entertaining and exciting. One program that mixes entertainment with education is "We All Use Math Every Day™," which provides free lessons based on the math used to solve crimes in CBS' hit series "NUMB3RS" on Friday nights. More than 28,000 teachers around the nation have signed up for this program for high school students developed by Texas Instruments in partnership with CBS and in association with the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM).

Order a pizza, tune into the show with your teen, and discuss how math helped solve the crimes to make a Friday TV night that's both fun and educational. If your child's teachers aren't using the classroom activities, encourage them to do so. Visit www.cbs.com/numb3rs for details, as well as more parenting tips from education experts.

Take A Trip

Many popular tourist attractions also help stimulate young minds. When traveling on a family vacation or simply exploring the sights in your own town, visit math and science exhibits in museums, learning centers, colleges or zoos to show how math relates to teens' interests and hobbies.

When on vacation, ask your teen to create the day's agenda, calculate the shortest walking or driving routes to visit the attractions, or figure out currency exchange rates.

Test The "Truth"

Beyond balancing a checkbook,

math teaches analytical and problem-solving skills that are necessary throughout life. Showing teens how to challenge what they are told by analyzing facts and figures in the media and on the Internet will teach them to test statements and think beyond conventional wisdom. Go through the newspaper or online news sites and discuss articles or current issues of interest to your teen. Challenge them to re-create the statistics used to support each side of a debate, or to double-check the charts and graphs for accuracy.

Take the Maximum

Helping teens plan their math education early on can make an impact on their educational and career opportunities later in life. The requirement for a strong math background is no longer just for engineers and scientists, and parents must plan ahead to ensure that their teens are prepared, no matter what career they choose.

Just like English and reading, math coursework builds on concepts learned in earlier grades. Teens need to take a math class every year from middle school through graduation to ensure the most opportunities remain open to them later in life. Know what math courses the schools offer and encourage teens to take classes that challenge them every year, regardless of their school's minimum requirements.

By working with teens to show how math is relevant every day, parents can help ensure their children's personal and professional success in the future.