

Students at Cyril Varney Public School enjoy math class.

Parents as Partners: Math at Home

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Math isn't what it used to be. It's much more interactive and fun.

In today's classrooms, students engage in numbers and numeracy through meaningful activities that are often connected to the world around them.

They develop an understanding of math and learn strategies to solve problems. This often involves the use of concrete materials and/or drawing pictures to represent the concepts being presented.

"With a focus on critical thinking, students gain a deeper understanding of how to solve math problems, strategies they will retain for years to come," says Rainbow District School Board superintendent Lesleigh Dye.


"Having a positive attitude and growth mindset will encourage children to believe they can be successful in math," says Dye. "Just as students see themselves as readers and writers, we want them to see themselves as mathematicians."

Math is fun

Feeling successful and having fun

are the best ways for children to develop a love of math and a belief in their ability to do math. Parents/guardians can support their children's learning in many ways.

Share times when you use math at home, at work and in the community. Engage in math together. Participate in math games, solve logic puzzles and observe patterns. Read the newspaper, buy groceries, measure ingredients, build projects and watch sports.

"Math is everywhere," says Dye. "The more parents/guardians help children to connect the math they learn at school with the math in everyday life, the more they will see it as a relevant part of their world." 

Online Math Games

Children enjoy using the computer. Encourage your child to spend time playing online games to practice math.

These websites are a good place to start:

- oame.on.ca/mathies
- illuminations.nctm.org
- <http://nlvm.usu.edu>
- cemc2.math.uwaterloo.ca/mathfrog/
- <http://nrich.math.org>
- Coolmath4kids.com

For more information, visit rainbowschools.ca and click on "Parents" to access a series of math tip sheets as well as math games to foster an "I love math" attitude in your child.

Here are a few ways parents can become partners and support their children with math at home:

Talk: Ask questions to encourage strategic thinking.

Let your child teach you: Engage in dialogue to show genuine interest.

Encourage your child to ask questions: What do I know? What do I have to find out? What information will I use? How can I get started?

Create a plan: Your child may think there is one way to solve a problem. Help your child to see that he or she can use any strategy that makes sense.

Read out loud: Have your child read the problem out loud and then restate it using his or her own words.

Reassure: Encourage your child to persevere. Success will follow.