



## KEEP KIDS' MATH SKILLS SHARP

Summer vacation gives kids great opportunities to experience the world around them and to fine tune those skills they learned at school in fun and memorable ways. In addition to supplying your child with fun books to read over the summer, use these five tips for helping them explore math concepts while having fun wherever their summer takes them. And for a special treat, tune in to *My CYBERCHASE Summer*, a three-month initiative on PBS KIDS GO! that connects kids' favorite *CYBERCHASE* episodes with math-based games and activities you can access online at <http://pbskidsgo.org/cyberchase>.

### Work for Hire

Help your child find ways to earn money and experience the satisfaction of being paid for doing a task, whether that be taking out the trash on a regular basis, feeding the neighbor's cat, or helping you wash windows. Set a goal for the amount your child wants to earn over the summer, and keep track of progress on a weekly basis. For a fun savings diary you can make together, see

<http://www-tc.pbskids.org/cyberchase/knowyourdough/savings.pdf>.

### Vacation Budget

A family vacation is a great opportunity for kids to participate in how the money needed to pay for the trip will be spent. Brainstorm expense categories (food, lodging, entertainment, shopping, travel) and agree on the total amount of money available to cover the trip. Then estimate how much money should be allocated to each of the categories.

### When Close Enough Is Good Enough

Estimation is a powerful tool in mathematics. Before calculating a sum or a product, for example, using number sense to estimate the answer can help you know if your final calculation is reasonable. Here are some quick and easy ways to give your child opportunities to practice estimation in real world settings.

- At the restaurant, work together to estimate the total bill. To do this, decide on a way to make the prices of the menu items easy to work with (round up to the nearest dollar, for example), and use mental math to arrive at the total.
- At the supermarket, invite your child to estimate the cost of each item and check the estimation against the actual cost. Invent a challenge to figure out as you shop, such as estimating how many of the items on your list you can pay for with a ten or a twenty dollar bill.
- The next time you want to buy a pound or more of a particular food item, invite your child to estimate how many you will need to reach that weight, and then weigh that amount on the scale to check the estimate.

## **Be a Weather Watcher**

Summer weather is rich with opportunities to make estimates, predictions and measure to verify what actually happens. The next time rain is in the forecast, set up a simple rain gauge. As it rains, it's fun to estimate how much rain you think is falling, and then check your gauge afterwards to see how much actually fell. You can also set up a wind sock to track wind direction, and look for patterns in the weather as the wind changes direction. If you track wind direction over several weeks, for example, you might notice that most of the time the wind comes out of the west, and your weather has been fair, but when it shifted to an east wind, you had stormy weather. Measurement and looking for patterns are both important building blocks in mathematics.

## **Get Active!**

Invite your child to set a performance goal in a type of exercise he or she enjoys, then come up with a plan to meet that goal. For example, your child might want to be able to ride his or her bicycle a certain distance (and for older children, this might be a certain distance in a given amount of time). Once the goal is set, help your child measure how far he or she can presently ride (and how much time it takes). Agree on a practice schedule, and keep track of progress. After a week, look at how the distance (and the time) has changed. Keeping track can help your child think about what is causing the change, and what can be done to continue improving. It can also help your child predict how long it will take to reach that goal, with built-in motivation to keep at it!