

Parent Newsletter

For Title I Families

Chrystiana Miller, Title I Teacher

A positive mindset can help your child succeed in math

Think your child's state of mind has nothing to do with his performance in math class? Think again. According to research, the brain's "emotion" and "intellect" centers are connected. They are permanently entwined.

What this means for your child is that his mindset can affect his ability to solve math problems. Think about it: If he's nervous or upset about the worksheet in front of him, he may struggle to answer the questions. But if he's calm and confident, he'll likely do much better.

To encourage a positive mindset in your child when it comes to math:

- **Remind** him that effort leads to achievement. Does your child claim he can't do math because he's "just not smart"? That implies people are either born intelligent or not. But that isn't true. Buckling down can lead to smarts.
- **Send** the right message. Instead of saying, "That problem looks really hard," say, "That problem looks challenging." If your child worries about something being too difficult, he may decide he can't do it. But if it's a challenge—not necessarily hard or easy—he might approach it more positively.
- **Teach** him to relax. If your child's jitters get the best of him when he's faced with a math problem, have him take a deep breath. Suggest that he picture something happy or fun. Remind him that he knows more than he thinks he does. If you can help him calm his nerves before he picks up his pencil, he'll have a better chance for success!

Five ways parents can improve their children's listening skills

Teachers agree that the ability to listen is one of the most important skills children need in order to be successful in school. Here are five ways to help your child strengthen her listening skills:

1. **Be a good model.** When your child is telling you something, stop what you're doing. Give her your full attention. Some parents find it easier to sit down so that their child's eyes are at their own eye level.
2. **Have family members** take turns telling about their day. Then have each person draw a name and repeat something that happened to the person whose name they drew.
3. **Play Simon Says.** This will teach your child to listen very carefully and to follow directions exactly.
4. **Practice reflective listening.** When you say something, ask your child to paraphrase what you said. When your child asks a question, repeat her question and then respond.
5. **Stop and ask questions** during story time. When you get to an exciting part of the book, ask, "What do you think will happen next?"

Learning to work with others leads to academic success

There's a lot to be said for encouraging children to show leadership. But, let's face it—some kids are just plain bossy. They won't take turns. They won't share. They won't listen to what anyone says.

Your child will be expected to work with others. So, whether he has a group project in social studies or a role in the school play, he'll be more successful if he knows how to be a team player.

To help your child learn how to be less of a dictator and more of a contributor:

- **Allow family members** to take turns making some decisions—from which movie to watch to what to have for dinner.
- **Establish some basic house rules.** For example, if one child cuts the cake, the other gets to choose the first piece. If one child chooses the game, the other gets the first turn.
- **Teach fair ways** to make decisions. Have your children play “rock, paper, scissors” to see who gets on the computer first. Flip a coin to decide who takes the first bath.
- **Praise your child** when you see him being a team player. “That was nice of you to let your brother pick the cookie he wanted first.”



Research reveals discipline that actually works

Think about how your parents raised you. What discipline methods did they use? Studies show that even when parents don't agree with how they were disciplined as children, many use the same approaches themselves.

For example, adults who were yelled at as kids were more likely to yell as parents—even if they thought yelling didn't work, according to one study.

In order to discipline effectively, consider what you believe will work. Experts say certain methods work best. For example:

- **Plan ahead.** Talk with your child about discipline. Why is it helpful? How does it work? After considering her ideas, list basic rules and consequences. Then follow through with consistency, fairness and respect.
- **Acknowledge good behavior.** What are the most important behaviors for your child to learn? When you see them, take notice. Say, “It's nice that you invited the new boy to sit with you at lunch. I bet that made him feel good.”
- **Use consequences** that are natural or logical. When your child does something inappropriate, choose a natural or logical response, if possible. A natural consequence of forgetting homework is getting a zero. A logical consequence of losing an item is having to replace it.