



**North Stratfield School
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Way's to Support Mathematical Thinking at Home

Just as reading daily makes better readers, doing math daily, makes better mathematicians. As parents there are many things you can do to help your child become mathematically powerful. As in any subject area, a positive attitude is the essence of productive learning. A child's level of confidence determines his/her ability to obtain and retain new learning as well as persevere when the problem is difficult. A parent's attitude is equally as important. In social circles, we never hear someone say, "I really do not comprehend what I read." However, we often hear people say, "I never did well in math."

As educators and parents, we need to offer students meaningful mathematical problems that emphasize depth in mathematical thinking rather than superficial exposure to a series of fragmented topics. When doing math with your child, always ask, "Why do you think that?" and, "How did you get that answer?" By talking about a math problem together, you can find many other ways to solve it. Remember, there is more than one way to solve a problem but it must make sense!

Below are some strategies you may see your children use when adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing numbers. There are many advantages to using flexible strategies:

1. They are easier to understand - they record directly partial sums/partial products.
2. They are number oriented rather than digit oriented.
3. They are performed left to right and thus connect directly to the teaching of estimation strategies and place value concepts.
4. They are easier to perform mentally.
5. They eliminate the need for the abstract regrouping that students often find confusing.

Along with these flexible strategies, students are also taught the standard algorithm. It is important for students to understand the underlying concepts of place value before moving to the procedures involved in the standard algorithm. Daily fact practice is key to building automaticity in basic facts thereby freeing up your child to apply the basic facts when solving more complex problems.

The following are just a few of the many sites that reinforce fact fluency and are available for free:

<http://www.playkidsgames.com/mathGames.htm>

<http://www.playkidsgames.com/games/mathfact/mathFact.htm>

<http://www.mathfactcafe.com/home/>

<http://hoodamath.com/>