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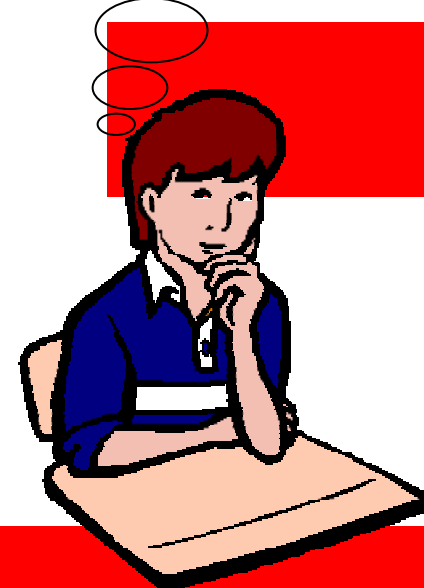
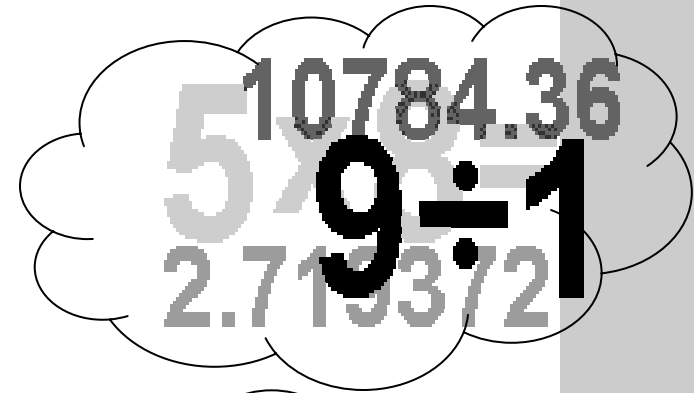
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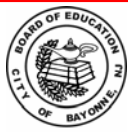


Mental Math



Bayonne Board of Education

November 2009



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669 Avenue A
Bayonne, New Jersey 07002

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

Helping students to appreciate and master mathematics is extremely important in today's society. Advances in science, technology and communications, along with changes in the workplace, make it necessary for all students to have extensive mathematical knowledge.

Research has shown that children are most likely to be successful in mathematics and other academics when parents take an active role in the learning process. Parental involvement helps reinforce children's skills and develop a positive attitude toward mathematics.

Being able to do mathematics in your head is important too. Doing mathematics in your head, "mental math", is a valuable tool that comes in handy when making quick calculations such as in restaurants and supermarkets. Let your child know that by using mental math, his or her mathematics skills will become stronger.

Please review the tips listed in this brochure which will help your child develop more confidence in his/her mathematical abilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia L. McGeehan".

Patricia L. McGeehan, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Tips to Help Children Develop Positive Math Attitudes

(as excerpted from <http://pbskids.org/cyberchase>)

Here are some suggestions you should use to help kids develop positive attitudes toward mathematics:

» **Show a "can-do" attitude toward math.**

Your child learns from your behaviors. Avoid making comments like, "I was never very good at math." If you use your everyday math experiences (such as counting change at the store, timing how long something takes, or measuring ingredients in the kitchen) as opportunities for success, your child will develop self-confidence and problem-solving skills that will carry over into other math environments.

» **Being wrong can help you be right.**

A lot of us feel frustrated when something that involves math goes wrong. Having trouble balancing the checkbook, cutting a piece of wood too short, or underestimating how much food you needed for a dinner party are experiences we all have had at one time or another. You can turn negative experiences like these into positive learning opportunities when you talk with your child about what happened, and what you might do differently next time around.

» **"Talk math" with your child.**

The next time you have to measure or count something, share what you are thinking and look for ways your child can take part.

» **Model problem-solving strategies.**

No matter what the problem is, it's always a good idea to take a break when frustration sets in and start again when you're fresh. And sometimes breaking down the problem into smaller problems helps you see a solution that makes the bigger problem easier.

» **Ask questions.**

When your child is trying to solve a problem, ask questions such as "How did you figure that out?" or "What are you thinking?" or even "Can you draw me a picture to show me what you mean?" Having kids explain their logic can help them better understand their reasoning and see their way more clearly to a solution.

» **Focus on the process.**

Knowing how to approach a problem is just as important as coming up with an answer. Don't dwell on arithmetic mistakes. Instead, focus on supporting the strategy your child uses to approach a problem. Often, there's more than one correct way to solve it.