

How math adds up

Math isn't just for math class. Knowing how to use numbers will benefit your middle grader in his other courses, too. Share these ideas.

Social studies

When your child makes a time line of historical events or uses coordinates to locate a city on a map, he's doing math. Here's a fun way to combine math and social studies at home: Encourage him to watch this month's election-night coverage and figure out which combinations of states would lead to the 270 electoral votes needed to win the presidency. Or have him hold a mock election among friends



and family members, and calculate the percentage of votes each state or local candidate receives.

Science

In science class, your middle grader will measure liquids for experiments, figure out speed and velocity, and graph results.

In fact, most science experiments involve math in some way. Remind him to double-check formulas and calculations on lab reports—just as he would check his work in math class. He will see the connection between what he's learning in algebra, geometry, or regular math class and what he's doing in science. 👍

Parent to Parent

A jarful of gratitude

Sometimes I feel like my 12-year-old son, Brock, takes things for granted, like the rides I give him or the Internet I pay for. For example, he won't be ready when it's time to leave or he'll complain that a friend has faster Internet. A neighbor shared an idea her family uses to remember what they're thankful for, and I decided to try it.

I had Brock cut colored construction paper into squares and stack them near an empty glass jar. In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving,

I asked everyone to pay attention to small things they appreciated. Each time they noticed something, they could write it on a square and drop it into the jar.

Before our holiday meal, we are going to pass the jar around and have everyone read a square. Then, we're going to start a new jar for each month so Brock learns that being thankful isn't just for Thanksgiving. 👍



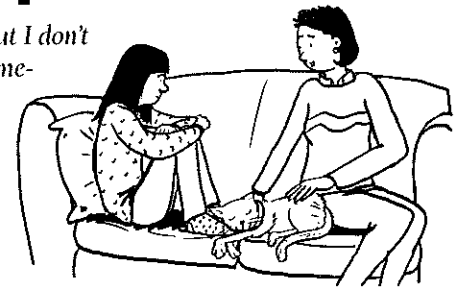
Q & A

Tween blues—or depression?

Q My daughter seems down lately, but I don't know if it's normal mood swings or something more serious. How can I tell?

A Mood swings are a normal part of adolescence. But if your child is sad or irritable for more than a couple of weeks—and if it interferes with her regular activities—she may be depressed. Other clues include withdrawing from friends and family, frequent headaches or stomachaches, or sleeping too much or not enough.

Point out what you've noticed by saying something like, "You seem kind of quiet lately." If she says she feels "angry at the world" or "hopeless," don't try to downplay her feelings by saying "You shouldn't feel that way" or "That's no big deal." Instead, listen and tell her you want to help. Then, contact her pediatrician or the school counselor for guidance. *Note:* If she insists nothing is wrong but symptoms continue, seek help anyway. 👍



Talking without screens

Face-to-face communication can fall by the wayside if your tween sticks to texting or chatting on screens. By actually talking to people, she will build interpersonal skills and pay attention to the world around her. Consider this advice:

■ Make screens off-limits for everyone—parents included—during meals or while riding in the car. This will get your child talking to the people she's with, rather than those "inside her phone."

■ If your middle grader participates in activities after school, she'll naturally spend more time talking to friends than in texting them. For instance, if she

works for the school newspaper, she will interview classmates or toss around article ideas with fellow staff members. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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