

# Questions

## Parents Can Ask... *About Math Instruction*



When your child struggles in math, you need specific information to help you encourage and support your child as they develop and build their math skills. Whether attending a parent/teacher conference, participating in writing the IEP (Individual Education Program) or working with your child at home use these questions to help you gather the information you need. Use the boxes provided to record the answers from your child's teacher(s) or education specialist.

**Remember:** Always ask for an explanation of anything that you do not understand.

*If you have questions about your child's general progress in math, ask. . .*

1. At this point in the school year, what should my child be able to do in math?

2. At this point in the school year, what can my child do in math?

3. Does the way my child learn make it harder to understand the math? If so in what way?

4. What strategies, books, materials, or other resources are being used to teach my child math? Please tell me about these and how they support my child's learning needs.

5. In what ways can we connect what is being taught with real life experiences and build on what he/she already knows?

6. What specific activities can we do at home to support and reinforce, or build on what is being taught at school? How can we include math in those activities?

7. Are there specific math terms that are important to know?

8. What mathematical tools should my child be using?

The following are questions that you can ask to learn about what your child is doing in math class -

***If your child has difficulty with adding or subtracting, ask. . .***

1. Does my child understand addition (or subtraction) and what it means? Can my child show these skills with real world objects? *For example, can he/she show 12 minus 8 using 12 balls, taking away 8 of them and reporting what is left?*

2. Are there materials you could suggest, or that we can borrow, to work on this skill at home?

***If your child is in the third grade or above and has trouble with multiplication, ask. . .***

1. What multiplication facts (you may know these as “times tables”) are my child expected to know? Which of these facts does my child know?

2. What does my child do when you ask him/her to do a multiplication problem? If you asked my child to tell you the answer to the question, “What is 4 times 5?” how would he/she try to find the answer?

3. In your opinion, what is it about multiplication that my child does not understand?

4. How do you teach multiplication? Do your students use materials such as blocks to show what multiplication means with real items or do they memorize the facts?

5. What specific activities can we do at home to help my child with multiplication?

***If your child knows her multiplication tables and can add and subtract numbers easily, but has trouble when asked to solve a story problem sometimes also called a word problem, ask...***

1. Why do you think my child has trouble with story problems? Does he/she have trouble reading the problem and understanding what he/she reads, or does he/she just not know the math to solve it?

2. If reading skills are an issue, is it possible for my child to have someone read word problems to him/her in class?

3. When my child does not understand a story problem, what do you do to help him/her understand? Please give me an example.

4. What can we do at home to help him/her with understanding story problems? Are there specific materials you can show me, or loan me that will help me to help my child at home.



*If you have questions about testing/assessment, ask . . .*

1. How is my child's progress measured/assessed (for example, is it through a paper and pencil test or through showing the answer to questions that are asked)?

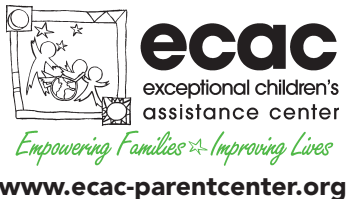
2. How often do you measure/assess my child's progress?

3. Will my child be required to take standardized test(s) in math? If so, what specific classroom activities prepare him/her for this testing?

*If your child is not working on the same math level as other students his age, ask . . .*

1. Can you tell me how you are measuring my child's progress in math to make sure he/she continues to improve and does not fall further behind?

2. When my child answers a math problem incorrectly, what ways of re-teaching works best for my child?



For more information, please contact:  
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