



COACHING CORNER

The newsletter of the Eatontown Public Schools ELA and Math Coaches

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MEET OUR COACHES

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SUPPORTING YOUR READER AT HOME

You already know that reading unlocks the imagination and ignites curiosity. But in this busy world, how do you fit in the time between work and all the other hats you wear to support your middle grade reader? You'll be happy to hear that there are many opportunities just waiting to be discovered. It can be as simple as reading funny memes together, sending a text with new vocab words mixed into the message or playing a family game! The opportunities are endless and do not need to take up a lot of extra time. Attached is a freebie by Marina Cahill-The Hungry Teacher from TeachersPayTeachers on 5 Ways to Support Your Middle Grade Reader. Just click on the link and download her helpful suggestion guide, as well as, the thematic book list for middle schoolers. It is quite possible that your reader just hasn't discovered the type of book that instead of sleeping, will have them hiding under the covers, flashlight in hand, voraciously reading adventures of characters in far off lands.

[Click here for the link.](#)

FUN WAYS TO READ WITH YOUR CHILD

[HTTPS://WWW.COLORINCOLORADO.ORG/ARTICLE/FUN-AND-EFFECTIVE-WAYS-READ-CHILDREN](https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/fun-and-effective-ways-read-children)

Experts believe that reading to your child every day is one of the most important things parents can do.



BUILDING VOCABULARY AT HOME

You may not know it but just by talking to your child you are building their vocabulary. Most words in a child's vocabulary come from everyday encounters with language. Children pick up language from books, media, and conversations with the people in their lives. Learning a new word with your child doesn't have to take a long time: just a few minutes to talk about the word. Here are a few tips from Reading Rockets (<https://www.readingrockets.org/>) on how to build your child's vocabulary:



- Talk about the things you see in your neighborhood, on trips around town, or on television. These conversations help build a child's understanding of her world.
- At the grocery store take a trip down the pasta aisle to see the different boxes. Ask your child to compare and contrast the various noodles in terms of length, width, shape, and size. Choose one box and challenge your child to come up with descriptive words for that type of pasta.
- Also at the grocery store, the produce section is a great place to hear new interesting words. Words like rhubarb, asparagus, artichoke, and kiwi are fun to say, and fun to eat. As you introduce each one, use descriptive words to help your child learn. "A kiwi has a fuzzy outside, but the inside is bright green with black seeds!"
- When reading, pause to ask questions or comment on the story. Ask, "Why do you think he did that?" or "What do you think is going to happen next?"
- Use interesting and new words with your child. For example, "This cookie is scrumptious! It is really good!" or "I can see you're reluctant to leave, but we can come back tomorrow."
- Tell your children stories from your own life, or about the day they were born. This helps develop their personal and cultural identity.



ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS ABOUT BOOKS

The Middle School ELA department is proud to share that students are reading in book clubs with multiple titles that lend themselves to young adult themes. Students are enjoying sharing their perspectives during weekly classroom discussions. They are learning the proper dialogue for academic conversations. For example, phrases like these can be heard: I agree, and I would like to add; I see your point however, Respectfully, I disagree because.

GROWTH MINDSET IN MATHEMATICS

Carol Dweck is the brains behind a positive frame of mind called a “growth mindset,” is just that - a mindset. According to Dweck, a growth mindset is the belief that with the right instruction and practice anyone can improve his or her ability. This can be true of any subject but most importantly for math, which is different from most subjects due to the emphasis on speed, focus on calculations and the cumulative nature of the concepts. Due to the rigorous nature of math, approaching it with a positive frame of mind allows for all students, young and old, to grow and expand their math ability.

The largest barrier to a student’s success is his or her mindset. If a child has a fixed mindset, the belief is that success relies on an innate talent and working hard is only necessary if he or she lacks ability. However, everyone HAS the capability to improve in math. Old beliefs, such as “boys are naturally better at math than girls,” have long been disproven, yet this stigma is still around today. Advancement and success can be achieved by changing one’s mindset. Not all students will achieve at the same time or to the same level, BUT improvement will be seen nonetheless.

There are four main ways we can help instill a growth mindset in a child:

1. Teach and explain to our kids about the brain’s ability to grow
2. Model and praise mistakes as opportunities for brain growth
3. Provide the opportunity for more open-ended math tasks and
4. not just focus on facts alone.
5. Remove the emphasis on speed and focus more on the process



With the right mindset and support, all students can learn and grow their abilities in the math classroom.

<https://www.mindsetworks.com/parents/growth-mindset-parenting>

<https://www.ldatschool.ca/math-growth-mindset/>

BIG IDEAS MATH HELP AT HOME

As we move into the Spring months, students are more than halfway through their Big Ideas Math chapters! If you haven’t already been using these, on every Big Ideas math homework page is a green house outline with a QR code. See the picture below for an example. You can scan the QR code with your smart phone, Tablet, or i-pad. It will pull up a “Homework Help” page where you can watch a video to see how to solve similar problems. The math characters, a dog Newton and a cat Descartes, will be throughout the lessons and videos. Hopefully these quick videos are useful during homework time.

Remember that you also have access to the Big Ideas Math Dashboard at home. To access this, your child should login on their school computer. Click on the Clever tab then click Big Ideas Math. This dashboard provides access to daily lessons, videos, vocabulary flash cards, math tools, games, math musicals, and other student resources. These math resources that are available to you are a helpful component in our new Big Ideas Math curriculum.



MATH ANXIETY

Does your child seem to avoid math at home? Does he or she find any reason to leave the classroom during math lessons? Is it difficult for him or her to retain information, strategies, or facts relating to math? If you answered yes to any other these questions, your child may be experiencing math anxiety. According to Eutopia.org, math anxiety affects almost half of elementary students.

What is It?

Frontiers for Young Minds describes math anxiety as an anxiousness that takes up space in a person's working memory when they are presented with math. With this crucial space being used, math problems become much more difficult to understand and solve. Some students may completely freeze or even shed tears when asked a question in class due to this anxiety. Consequently, a person can start to actually fear math and show low achievement.

What can we do?

Researchers have found that there are some strategies and interventions that can be used to alleviate this anxiety. Here are some suggestions for students to use at home and at school:

- Write down your thoughts and feelings beforehand to release them from your working memory before class or a big test.
- Stop to take deep breaths when feeling overwhelmed in class or during homework.
- Discuss this anxiety with your teacher so they are aware and can help you find individual interventions/solutions in class.
- Ask your teacher for help on questions you had difficulty with on your homework.
- Use mnemonic devices to help with memorization.
 - Example- For long division, use "Does McDonalds Sell Burgers?" The first letter stands for each step- Divide, Multiply, Subtract, Bring Down.)
- Write down information such as mnemonic devices or formulas you needed to remember when class starts or as soon as you get handed a test.
- Don't expect perfection. Everyone makes mistakes!

Resources:

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/recognizing-and-alleviating-math-anxiety>

<https://kids.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/frym.2017.00057>

<https://childmind.org/article/help-kids-with-math-anxiety/>

ROOM RECESS



Room Recess is a free educational website that provides over 150 learning games for Math, ELA, and typing. These learning games help students practice and build upon essential skills in a fun and motivating way. Some of the important foundational math skills and topics include number operations, decimals, fractions, rounding, integers, geometry, and problem solving. Students do not need an account to access any of the games. They can simply visit the website roomrecess.com to find a specific game or explore the impressive variety of games!