

T/E Intermediate 3-4 Mathematics

January/February 2012

Fun Math Challenges for Families

Developing children's basic computational skills is important but being able to use these skills is the ultimate goal. So you ask, "What can I do at home to help make my child a problem solver and have fun with them at the same time?" The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics has a list of challenges that are interesting and relevant to everyday life that you can present to your child and work through with him/her together. The challenges offer your child an opportunity to stretch their thinking skills and develop in areas of logic, estimation, organization and analysis. In addition, the skills being developed in each problem are listed and examples of how they would be used in real world situations are given.

Two Examples:



"Beating Heart."

How long does your heart beat?
How long it would take for your heart to beat 1,000 times.
If you started counting your heartbeats at midnight on January 1, 2000, when would you count the millionth beat, the billionth?
Many children would be excited to come to school and relay this information to their friends or teacher.



Mmm, Chocolate!

Which of these chocolate covered cookies would you eat?
Suppose you love chocolate. The top of each cookie is covered with the same thickness of chocolate. If you want to choose the cookie with the most chocolate how could you determine which one to pick?

The site offers step by step help including suggestions on how to get started and things to think about as you try to work out the problems. Solutions are also given. The more experience your child has with solving problems, the better they will become at it.

Access the site and a complete list of challenge problems by clicking on the link below. Pick the ones you think your child would find most interesting and have fun!

http://www.figurethis.org/challenges/challenge_index.htm

Here are some additional suggested sites for developing thinking and problem solving skills

Logic Games for kids

http://www.softschools.com/games/logic_games/

http://www.learninggamesforkids.com/logic_games.html

Word problems to solve

<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/activities/math/>

Chomp Challenge

<http://kids.discovery.com/games/puzzle-quiz/chomp>