



PRAIRIE SPIRIT
SCHOOL DIVISION

Support Guide for Parents

Kindergarten to Grade 9 Mathematics

Located on Treaty 6 Territory, the traditional homeland of the Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, Dakota, Lakota, and Métis Nation, we honor Indigenous histories, languages, and contributions through inclusive numeracy practices. Guided by reconciliation, equity, and inclusion, we work to eliminate barriers and provide all students with equitable access to mathematics.

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WHY MY SUPPORT MATTERS

Positive Math Attitudes Start at Home

Your involvement as a parent shapes not only performance, but your child's mindset toward math. Experts highlight that:

- Hearing phrases like “math is hard” from adults, including parents, can unintentionally fuel math anxiety and reduce confidence. Be sure to speak positively about math!
- When parents are positive about math and speak about it as interesting and useful, children are more likely to enjoy and engage with math.
- When we focus on encouragement and understanding rather than just answers, achievement improves.

In short: Your words and behaviour can influence how your child perceives math far more than whether you can solve every problem yourself.

“...In the absence of positive math attitudes, parents’ homework involvement, though well-intentioned, may backfire, negatively affecting children’s math growth across the school year and, in turn, children’s math anxiety” (Maloney et al., 2015, p. 1486).

So, let's explore how to effectively support your child's math learning in positive and engaging ways.



HOW COULD I SUPPORT MY CHILD?

1. Talk About Math in a Positive Way

Children absorb attitudes from the adults around them. Avoid saying:

- “Math was never my subject”
- “I’m bad at math!”

Instead:

- Talk about how math is useful and fun!
- Ask, “How did you use math today?” or “What strategy did you try?” This reinforces the idea that math is about thinking not just right answers.
- And remember, you (or your child) are not “bad at math”. There may be some foundational pieces missing – that’s it. These can be learned.



2. Build “Math as Play” into Everyday Life

You don’t need worksheets (but worksheets aren’t bad either):

- Make games with license plate numbers while driving
- Play card games and puzzles that involve logic or counting
- Use cooking or shopping to explore measurement and estimation

HOW COULD I SUPPORT MY CHILD?

3. Support a Strong Foundation, Brick-by-Brick

Math builds cumulatively. Missing concepts can make later topics harder to grasp, like missing bricks weakening a wall.

You can strengthen that foundation by:

- Identifying where your child is struggling
- Helping craft a study strategy
- Providing short, consistent practice (e.g., 5-10 minutes on key ideas)
- Encouraging persistence when concepts feel challenging

Strong foundational understanding boosts long-term success.



4. Encourage Help-Seeking & Consistent Strategies

For older students heading into higher levels:

- Encourage attendance in class, note-taking, question-asking, and dedicated space/time for homework
- Explore resources like online videos together (e.g., Math Antics or Khan Academy)
- Ask your child to teach you a piece of what they're learning (teaching others reinforces understanding)

Students build understanding and confidence as they seek help – encourage this!

TIPS & TRICKS FOR EVERYDAY MATH LEARNING

Here are research-aligned actionable tips:

Practice Together

Even if you don't know a concept (yet), sitting down together and exploring it shows support. It's OK to say, "I don't know this, but let's figure it out together."

Celebrate Effort, Not Just Correct Answers

Praise strategy, effort and persistence:

- "I like how you tried a new way."
- "You kept going even when it was tricky!"
- "Interesting! That's a new way I hadn't thought of; here's a way I thought of it..."

This builds confidence and reduces fear of mistakes.

Make Math Regular and Fun

Short, playful practice such as counting games, puzzles and car ride math activities reinforce math in the real world.

Additional Activities

To integrate purposeful Math talk:

- Play board, dice, and card games
- Read math-embedded books and stories
- Visit children's museums
- Cook
- Shop

Note: Research suggests that the value of home-based math games lies less in boosting formal test scores and more in building a child's mathematical confidence and flexibility.

UNDERSTANDING THE SASK. MATH CURRICULUM

Four Key Strands

The Saskatchewan curriculum details what concepts students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of the year. The curriculum organizes math content in strands:

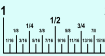
- Number and Operations
- Patterns and Relations
- Shape and Space
- Statistics and Probability

Using curriculum documents to align home practice with classroom goals can help you focus on topics your child is currently learning.

As you explore math with your child:

- Ask what strand they're working on
- Practice problems in that strand together
- Celebrate progress across multiple strands

You can find the provincial curriculum on the government website: curriculum.gov.sk.ca/

Progression of Mathematical Complexity Across the Curriculum (Example)		
Grade Level	Core Concept Focus	Home Application
Grade 1	Numbers to 20 and 2D Shapes 	Sorting toys and playing card games 
Grade 4	Digits to 10 000 and Decimals 	Measuring ingredients and reading charts 
Grade 9	Linear Relations and Probability 	Budgeting for home renovations and analyzing risks 

Remember: Your child's teacher is your best partner on this learning journey. Feel free to reach out to them for a closer look at what's being taught in class and for activities to help your child thrive outside of school.

MY PRAIRIE SPIRIT MATH CLASSROOM

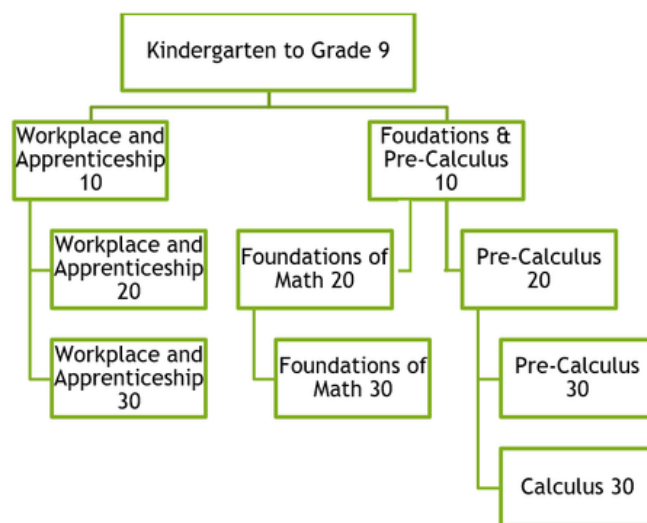
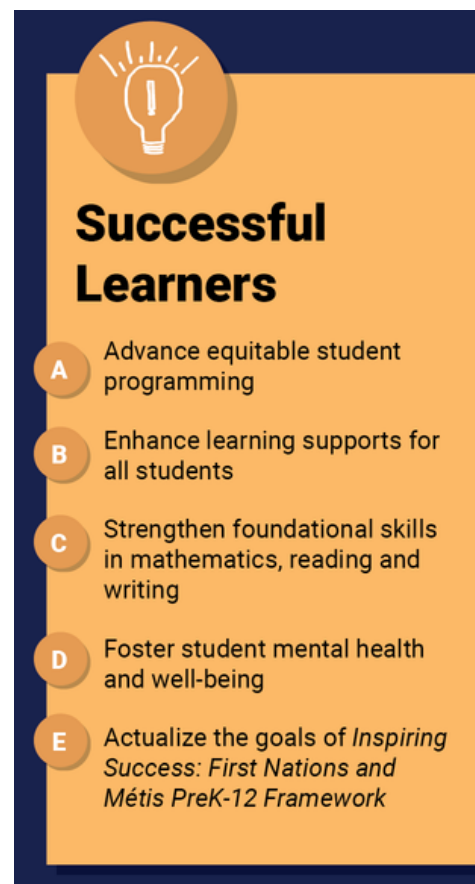
Successful Learners

One of the goals of the Prairie Spirit Board of Education's strategic plan is Successful Learners, which includes "strengthening foundational skills in **mathematics**, reading and writing".

The strategic plan also includes an aspirational goal of supporting Prairie Spirit Mathematicians who are: "effective and accurate when working with numbers, with the confidence to solve current and future problems involving mathematical concepts."

Math is a core subject from elementary to high school in Saskatchewan. Prairie Spirit's goal is to support students to enter Grade 10 with the math skills necessary to be successful in whatever math pathway they choose. Post-secondary opportunities require different math pathways as prerequisites for further study.

My Prairie Spirit Math Classroom (following page) identifies the instructional strategies teachers use to develop mathematicians that align with the Division's Strategic Plan.



*My Prairie Spirit **Math** Classroom*

Prairie Spirit mathematicians are effective and accurate when working with numbers, with the confidence to solve current and future problems involving mathematical concepts (Prairie Spirit Strategic [Plan](#)).

To develop Prairie Spirit mathematicians, mathematics instruction in Prairie Spirit classrooms should be:

Inclusive

- Represent individual and cultural diversity (ability, interests, backgrounds, life experiences)
- Encourage students of all abilities to participate at their starting point



Constructed

- Ask students to explore, discover, build and transfer understanding through questioning and productive struggle
- Call for students to model, represent, verify, generalize, and prove



Reflective

- Provide opportunities for students to share ideas, problems, and solutions with others
- Compel students to consider different perspectives from others in the room



Looking for help?

- Check out Prairie Spirit's numeracy support page.

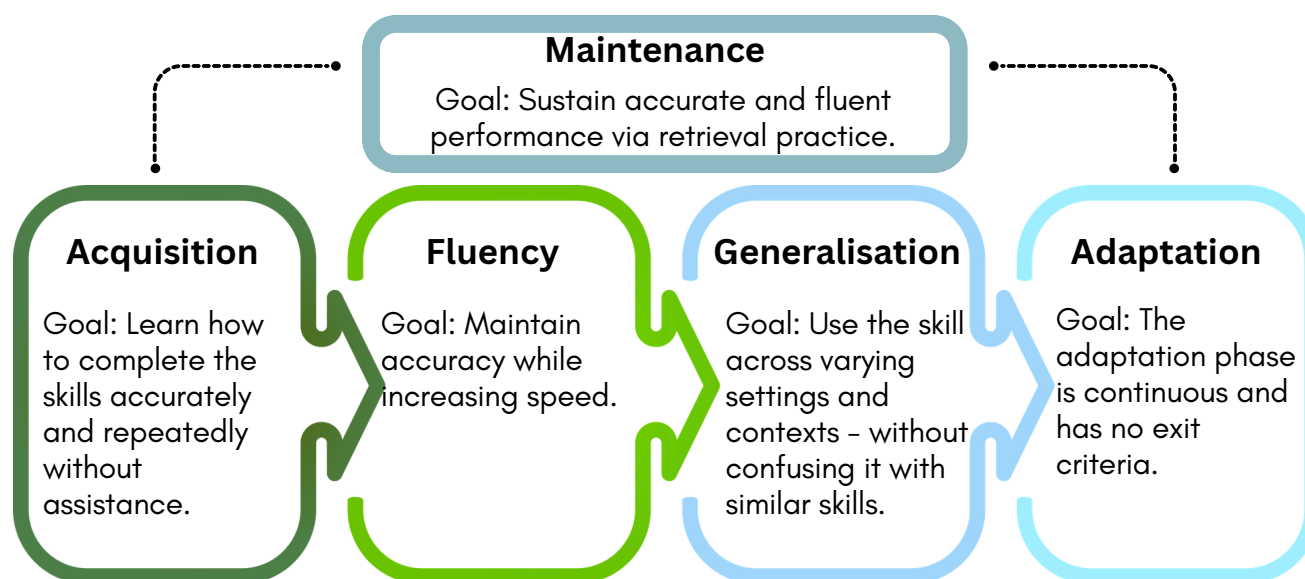


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STAGES OF MATH LEARNING

Stages of Learning

When learning math, there are distinct developmental stages that are incredibly helpful for parents to understand.



Haring & Eaton, 1978

Acquisition – A lot of time should be spent on building accuracy. This stage requires explicit instruction, substantial guidance, and immediate feedback.

Fluency – Students need fluency to retain and generate information. This stage requires a lot of active responding.

Generalisation – This stage is aimed at building flexibility. Students may be accurate and fluent but not in “new” settings. Practice in new situations is needed at this stage.

Adaptation – This stage encourages opportunities to use math skills for innovative problem solving.

WHEN & WHERE TO LOOK FOR EXTRA SUPPORTS

Extra Supports

Be proactive if you notice:

- Persistent math anxiety
- Avoidance of math homework
- Repeated struggles with core concepts

Supports can include:

- Talking with your child's teacher
- Partnering with a math help center or tutor
- Using targeted online resources

Early supportive interventions help prevent gaps from widening.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQs

How can I help my child if I don't understand new (to me) math methods?

- Focus on asking questions rather than providing answers: "Why did you do that?", "Does this make sense?", and "Can you show me a different way?". Work to build and understand an efficient method.
- Encourage. Don't just give the answer; let your child independently tackle problems to build persistence, while keeping an eye out for true frustration.

Is my child behind? How do I know?

- Ask teachers for specific strengths and weaknesses compared to grade-level standards.
- Check for underlying skill gaps (e.g., place value/numerical understanding, ability to do math operations) if your child struggles with new concepts.

How can I help with math anxiety or a negative attitude?

- Model a positive attitude toward math yourself.
- Play fun, low-stakes math-based games like board games (Snakes and Ladders, Yahtzee), card games, and dice games.

How can we incorporate math into daily life?

- Involve children in cooking (measuring), shopping (calculating prices/discounts), and banking.
- See Tips and Tricks for Everyday Math Learning above.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQs Continued

What should I ask at a parent-teacher conference?

- *What skills should my child have mastered by now?*
- *Are they just memorizing, or do they understand the concept?*
 - Remember, some children begin with memorizing and the deeper understanding comes later.
- *What tools or manipulatives are used in class?*
 - Remember, manipulatives are a helpful tool but use of them should fade as your child's skill increases.

How can I help my child with mental math?

- Encourage estimation in daily activities.
- Ask your child to explain their thinking process.

Common Misconceptions & Tips

- **Understandings over Facts:** Ensure your child understands the "why" behind concepts, such as what the equal sign means (understanding equivalence helps with later algebra), rather than just memorizing facts.
- **Flash Card Fluency:** That being said, once a child understands why a concept works, we want them to be able to recall/retrieve that information efficiently. Flash cards, or similar types of activities, build fluency asking children to retrieve the math facts builds long-term memory.
- **Mistakes are Okay:** Encourage a growth mindset; mistakes are opportunities to learn.

RESOURCE LIST

Resources

These resources can support practice in a way that aligns with modern math learning principles:

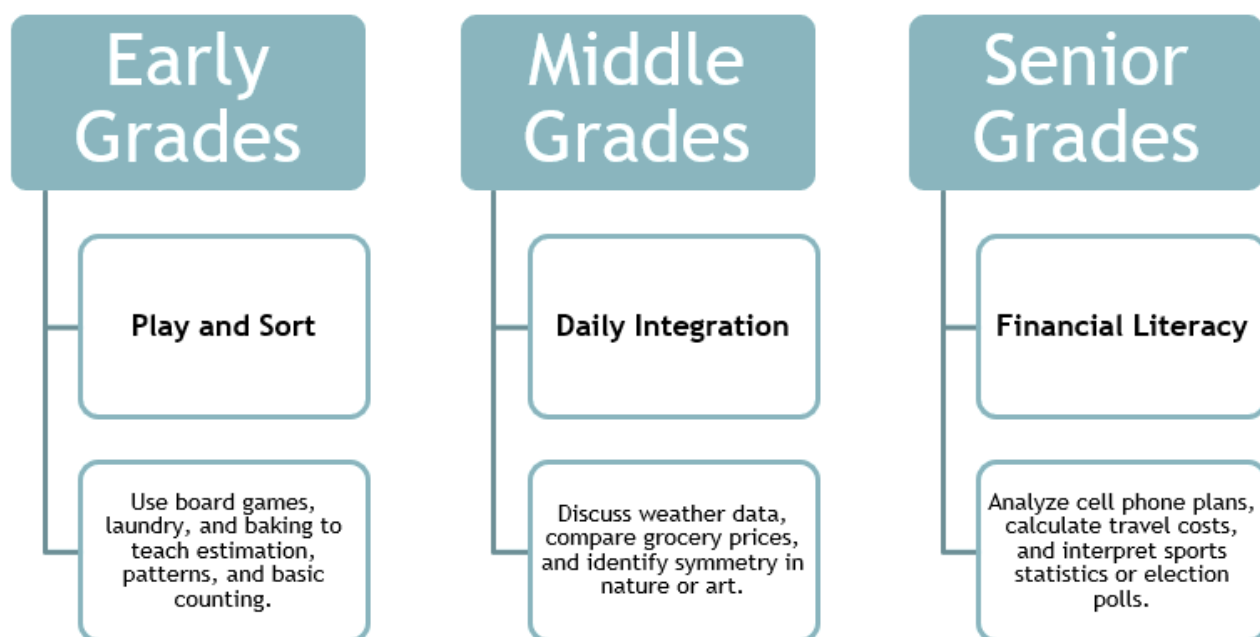
- Khan Academy (<https://www.khanacademy.org/>) – free lessons and practice by skill
- Math Antics (<https://mathantics.com/>) – clear, visually-animated videos that break down complex concepts into manageable steps
- IXL Math (<https://ca.ixl.com/math>) – practice problems aligned with grade outcomes
- Prodigy Math Game (<https://www.prodigygame.com/main-en>) – game-based math practice
- Coolmath Games (<https://www.coolmathgames.com/>) – fun logic and strategy games
- Toy Theatre (<https://toytheater.com/>) – Online virtual Math manipulatives including number charts, scales, place value mats and Canadian money, plus more!
- Saskatchewan's Building Math Success Parent Support Pamphlets for Grades 1-9 (<https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/categories/4370>) – Documents meant to support parents and caregivers as they promote positive math thinking. The documents also provide an overview of what Saskatchewan students are taught in school.
- Math Pickle (<https://mathpickle.com/>) – original math puzzles, games and problems
- Math is Fun (mathisfun.com) – games, puzzles, a math dictionary and more
- NRich (<https://nrich.maths.org/two>) – home-based primary math tasks for a child working with an adult

Be Mindful: If an app focuses more on speed-clicking or leveling up than on the logic behind the answer, it may actually mask foundational gaps. Use the app or video as a conversation starter. Instead of handing over the tablet and walking away, try co-playing or asking, "How does this video help solve this problem?" This turns a solo digital activity into a social, language-rich learning experience.

FINAL TAKEAWAYS

Be Involved

- Your involvement matters, not just academically but emotionally and motivationally.
- Avoid negative language about math. Speak positively about math, because what you say matters.
- Prioritize understanding and communication. Math talk builds reasoning.
- Make math fun and integrated in daily life. Playful math fosters curiosity.
- Value effort and persistence. Struggling with a concept doesn't mean failure. It's part of learning!
- Understanding how math is taught in schools, via the suggestions in this guide, can help you support in ways that align with classroom instruction.



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