

Math Notes for Parents

Every child should have a math section in their 3-ring binder. There should be three things taped to the math divider: the “Now check all your work carefully” card, the “Problem-Solving USA” card, and the Holt On-line log-in and password slip.

I try to work it so that the students can finish the math for the day in the class period. After all, we allot an hour and 15 minutes to math, which seems ample. However, if some students work very slowly, or if some students do not use their time in class well, and they don’t finish their math at school, then the unfinished math work becomes homework. Parents are *always* welcome to work on speeding up math facts and computation skills at home. IXL is available at home. IXL and Holt On-line passwords are the same.

The odd numbered problems have answers in the back of the book. After the lesson I do several problems in class with the students, showing them how to show their work as well as making sure they understand the concepts. Then I assign the remainder of the *odd* problems for them to do independently. Students are supposed to check each problem as they go. I want them to find out right away if they are having problems.

The next morning I ask everyone if they did the assignment, if they finished all the problems, and if they got 100%. Even if they initially got a problem wrong, if they corrected it and then got it right, I consider that they got 100%. Every child with 100% on their assignment gets \$1 in Market Day money. My goal is that I give every child money every day! I tell the students to keep the assignments in their 3-ring binders until after they get the test back on that chapter.

We have quizzes a couple of times for each chapter. After the quizzes are corrected, I send them home. Students need to bring them back the next day signed by a parent (at the top of the first page, please!) and with all their errors fixed.

At the end of each chapter is a chapter test in the book. We do that together on whiteboards, the students at their desks and me in front. It’s a competition—who can be fast and accurate to beat me, one problem at a time. It’s a great way to review before the paper and pencil test.

The paper and pencil test is the only grade that goes toward the report card grade. Everything else is formative—informing me of what the students know vs. what they still need to review and practice.

Even then, if a child gets below 80% on the test, they have the opportunity to fix their errors and get the test signed by a parent—just like a quiz—and then I will let them take a retest on the chapter.

Of course, if a child consistently scored in the 70s or below, we would have them move down a grade level in math. After all, there is no need to accelerate just for the sake of moving fast. We all want every student to get a good, solid foundation in math.