

# Help is Available—Strategies

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As a parent, you can support your teen’s education in many ways—from helping with course selections and planning a career pathway, to assisting with everyday schoolwork. While answering their questions, you might have your own questions about the best ways to help, what else you can try, and where to find more information.

You might be anxious about your own math skills or feel challenged by the difficulty of your child’s math homework, but your child will benefit greatly if you maintain a positive, encouraging attitude. Encourage your child to have a positive attitude about learning mathematics. Stress the importance of effort by prompting your child to face challenges positively and to see mathematics as a subject that is important. Students who believe that their hard work makes them “smarter” are more likely to try harder in mathematics, and their efforts result in better performance.

Here are some general tips and strategies that apply to many situations involving math and education.

Help is available!

## Specific strategies for helping with math homework

Don’t try to solve math questions for teens. Instead, suggest specific steps they can take to solve each question themselves. If they are stuck, you can suggest that they:

- Reread the problem out loud and check the meaning of math terms.
- Highlight important information in the problem.
- Look for examples of similar solutions in texts and notes.
- Break the problem into parts.
- Discuss alternative approaches.
- Take a break and try again later.
- Phone a friend or math helpline.
- Look for information related to the topic on the Internet.

## Encourage your teen to proofread math schoolwork. Suggest that they ask themselves:

- Have I made proper use of math terminology?
- Have I used appropriate math tools?
- Have I included correct units where required?
- Have I answered the question that was asked? Would someone else understand my solution process?
- Have I completed all parts of the assignment?
- Does my solution make sense?

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## Specific strategies for promoting math at home

- Ask about math in school. What topics are being discussed? What's the homework? What's interesting?
- Connect math to daily life. Encourage everyone in your family to estimate grocery bills, change, tax, tips, measurements, travelling distances and times, and even the quantity of paint or carpet needed for a room.
- Talk about how you use math in your job and daily life, and about math in the newspaper (sports statistics, stock prices, math puzzles, graphs).
- Seize every opportunity to calculate mentally and talk about the process involved.

## Specific strategies for effective studying

### Encourage your teen to:

- Clarify the exact content of a test as soon as a date is assigned. Ask questions in advance.
- Spread studying out over several days.
- Use a variety of techniques —writing, talking, singing — to retain information.
- Make study notes to condense the material to be learned.
- Rework questions that caused difficulty in the past, and check solutions.

(Based on <http://www.peelschools.org/parents/Pages/default.aspx>)