

A positive mindset can help your child succeed in math

Think your child's state of mind has nothing to do with his performance in math class? Think again. According to research, the brain's "emotion" and "intellect" centers are connected. They are permanently entwined.

What this means for your child is that his mindset can affect his ability to solve math problems. Think about it: If he's nervous or upset about the worksheet in front of him, he may struggle to answer the questions. But if he's calm and confident, he'll likely do much better.

To encourage a positive mindset in your child when it comes to math:

- Remind him that effort leads to achievement. Does your child claim he can't do math because he's "just not smart"? That implies people are either born intelligent or not. But that isn't true. Buckling down can lead to smarts.
- Send the right message. Instead of saying, "That problem looks really hard," say, "That problem looks challenging." If your child worries about something being too difficult, he may decide he can't do it. But if it's a challenge—not necessarily hard or easy—he might approach it more positively.
- Teach him to relax. If your child's jitters get the best of him when he's faced with a math problem, have him take a deep breath. Suggest that he picture something happy or fun. Remind him that he knows more than he thinks he does. If you can help him calm his nerves before he picks up his pencil, he'll have a better chance for success!

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