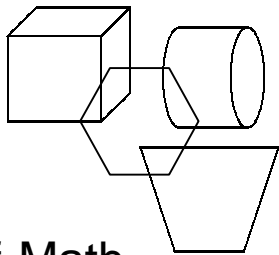
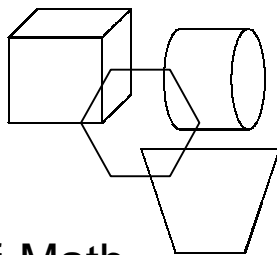


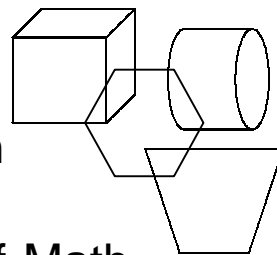
Help Your Children Make Sense of Math



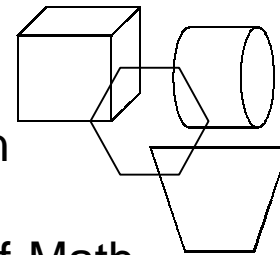
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Ask the right questions

In helping children learn, **one goal is to assist children in becoming critical and independent thinkers.** You can help by asking questions that guide, without telling them what to do.

Good **questions**, and good **listening**, will help children make sense of the mathematics, build self confidence and encourage mathematical thinking and communication. A good question opens up a problem and supports different ways of thinking about it. This bookmark has some questions you might try; notice that none of them can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.”

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Getting Started

What do you need to find out?
What do you know now?
How can you get the information?
Where can you begin?
What terms do you understand/not understand?
What similar problems have you solved that would help?



While Working

How can you organize the information?
Can you make a drawing (model) to explain your thinking?
What are other possibilities?
What would happen if . . . ?
Can you describe an approach (strategy) you can use to solve this?
What do you need to do next?
Do you see any patterns or relationships that will help you solve this?
How does this relate to ...?
Can you make a prediction?
Why did you...?
What assumptions are you making?

Questions that work

Reflecting about the Solution

How do you know your solution (conclusion) is reasonable?
How did you arrive at your answer?
How can you convince me your answer makes sense?
What did you try that did not work?
Has the question been answered?
Can the explanation be made clearer?

Responding

(helps clarify and extend their thinking)

Tell me more.
Can you explain it in a different way?
Is there another possibility or strategy that would work?
Is there a more efficient strategy?
Help me understand this part ...

Adapted from *They're Counting on Us*
California Mathematics Council, 1995

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