



Dear Parents:

Next week's focus is Geometry for Math Awareness Month. Parents, you may begin to worry that topics that you once thought were only taught in high school math classes like Algebra and Geometry are now being taught in elementary school. How is it possible for us to keep up with our child's learning in the elementary schools? It is not as difficult as it seems.

I was recently asked, "How did I become interested in teaching math?" I really reflected on that answer. The truth of the matter is that I became interested in math at home. I grew up on a farm and the youngest of five children. My parents were not college educated, but we spent a lot of time in the evenings playing games. Games that required scoring and using numbers, looking for patterns. I was about six-years-old when my grandpa showed me how to play games like pinochle, euchre, and cribbage. I didn't learn to like math by learning flashcards or algorithmic formulas. I liked to learn math because I wanted to make sure my opponents were keeping accurate scores.

This week April 18 -22, help your child see geometry in the world. Use vocabulary like 2-dimensional shapes (squares, rectangles, triangles, circles) and 3-D shapes (cubes, spheres, cylinders, and cones). You won't need to go too far for these shapes just look in their toy box, or everyday objects - ice cubes, ice cream cones, balls, placemats, name tags. Have your child draw shapes or build shapes from clay or sticks. Begin identifying some vocabulary words. Instead of using the term corner, start referring to them as the vertex or vertices. How many sides or edges does the shape have? The terms, trapezoids -quadrilaterals, hexa - 6, penta- 5, octa - 8, polygons and prisms will present themselves with older students. Parallel and perpendicular lines are all around us, just look at a railroad track for parallel or a street intersection for perpendicular. Shapes can be divided and begins the concept of fractions. Order a pizza for the family and discuss how many pieces the pizza has and how much will each person eat. I understood these terms when they were used in my everyday conversations with my dad. "Go get the quad and pick up the brush." The term "quad" helped me realize that my dad was referring to the four-wheeler and quad meant four, so when I went to my math class, my teacher started using the term quadrilateral or quadrangle that meant four sides or four angles. You don't need to love math, or know all the formulas, just engage in everyday conversations as geometry presents itself. Here are even more [ideas](#), books to read, videos, art opportunities and games to play surrounding geometry concepts.

This is a week for kids to dress up with shapes or patterns on their clothing. Talk about their clothing selections. Do they have a shirt, skirt, shorts, that has a pattern of stripes, or repetition of characters or color? Do they have polygon shapes with no curved edges? Team shirts often have numbers. Friday, wear a pair of glasses, silly glasses, sunglasses etc. What shape are the frames? Circle, Oval, Rectangle?

Don't forget to save and turn in your bread tags.

Math Counts - Carmen Tawney - LAS Elementary Math Coordinator