

# Summer Solving (part 1) By: Katherine Estep, Mathematics Coach K-5



Everyone knows about Summer Reading. Everyone agrees it's important for students to continue reinforcing literacy skills over the summer by consistent reading and writing, but what about Summer Solving? Your child's recently developed math skills can slip away over the lazy, dog days of summer, and parents can play a key role in reversing the trend by helping children to explore numbers and developing their number sense.

Does this sound like yet another chore? Don't worry, it's not! As a matter of fact, you can easily integrate mathematics into your summer routine, even vacations. Of course, it is important to practice math facts appropriate to your child's grade level, but please don't "drill and kill" (a "teacher-term" that means don't overdo the rote work). It can get very boring for both of you, even frustrating for your child. So say good-bye to those expensive practice books!

Below is a list of *meaningful* activities for you, your child, and your family to try! Remember that meaningful mathematics gets your child thinking, reasoning, problem solving and *can* be fun!

- **Go shopping!** This is a perfect time to practice adding, estimating, using a calculator, and percentages. Talk about the better deal or sale and how your child came to that conclusion. Before checking out, have your child guess what the total will be, and again, ask them why they think that. And of course, let your child count the money.

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- **Cooking and Baking!** Great opportunity to apply measurement skills. Have your child help you read recipes and measure ingredients. If you want to be creative, create a recipe together!
- **Games! Games! Games!** Games are one of the best ways to reinforce mathematical skills and facts. The key to making games an effective way to practice mathematical concepts is to *ask questions*. When playing games where a certain number is needed, ask, “How many ways can you make that number? What are they?” Let them be the banker or scorekeeper. Here are a list of some games that involve math skills:
  - UNO
  - Monopoly
  - Othello
  - Connect Four
  - Sudoku
  - Chess
  - Scrabble
  - Dominoes
  - Battleship
  - The Game of Life
  - Blokus