

# Math Tips

## For parents

BY ARVIND GUPTA, SPECIAL TO THE SUN    APRIL 1, 2009

With younger children:

Give your sons and daughters early math and science experiences. Visit a local science museum or look for math and science camps.

Make a conscious effort to avoid gender stereotyping when you buy toys for your children. Don't forget that girls and boys can both enjoy spatial games and building toys like blocks, K'Nex, and Lego (and if it has to be pink, the Lego website has a section of recommended products for girls). Fun board games such as Labyrinth, Rush Hour, and Tipover encourage spatial abilities.

Find out what your child is doing in math and science at school or in the child care setting. Does your child come home excited about an interesting activity or experiment he or she did that day? Talk about it.

Whenever you encounter a gender stereotype, remind both boys and girls that they can become anything they want to be -- including a mathematician, engineer or scientist.

As schools have become increasingly attentive to the educational needs of girls, author and counsellor Barry MacDonald reminds us not to leave boys behind in his best-selling book *Boy Smarts: Mentoring Boys for Success at School*. ([www.mentoringboys.com](http://www.mentoringboys.com))

With middle school and high school students:

As children plan for high school, encourage both boys and girls to take math and science.

To see the new mathematics courses for Grades 10 through 12 to be implemented in 2010 through 2012, go to [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/irp\\_math.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/irp_math.htm). It's never too early to learn about post-secondary entrance requirements.

Suggest that your daughter read up on the work of female mathematicians, as well as other resources on women in math and science. Google the "Association for Women in Mathematics" and read some great biographies.

And don't forget the great new books *Math Doesn't Suck* and *Kiss My Math* (for middle school math and pre-algebra respectively) by Danica McKellar formerly of the hit TV show *The Wonder Years*.

The books have companion websites, [www.mathdoesntsuck.com](http://www.mathdoesntsuck.com) and [www.kissmymath.com](http://www.kissmymath.com). Definitely worth a look.

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