



Be Confident with Everyday Mathematics: A Parent's Guide

It's not surprising that *Everyday Mathematics* lessons look different than the elementary math lessons you remember. They are different because they are better.

Think back to your elementary math lessons. You probably remember laboring over the memorization of multiplication tables and filling out endless worksheets. *Everyday Mathematics* was designed specifically to help children understand mathematics and learn to apply it, so they can be successful in our competitive workplace in careers rich in technology, problem solving and math knowledge.

Here are some frequently asked questions that parents like you may have about why *Everyday Mathematics* is different from the math lessons of the past ... and why that difference is good news.

Why does my child have to learn more than one way to solve a problem? Isn't there only one right way?

Many of us are surprised to learn that there are often several ways to arrive at the same answer. The methods for solving a problem are called algorithms. *Everyday Mathematics* teaches children alternative algorithms, or different ways to add, subtract, multiply and divide.

Why? Based on research from *Everyday Mathematics'* authors, we know that giving students different options for performing math allows them to choose which works best for them. This is helpful for children at all levels, from gifted to struggling math students. The high achiever comes to understand math more deeply and learns problem-solving skills important for the workplace. Struggling students may find an alternative method that allows them to solve problems that they could not solve before.

Everyday Mathematics is based on convergent thinking. While traditional math classes only give students a surface understanding of concepts, *Everyday Mathematics* students are encouraged to combine approaches to get a better overall understanding.

How will my child learn math without spending a lot of time memorizing math facts?

Students must know basic math facts, and *Everyday Mathematics* teaches them. But the process is different than the dull rote memorization from the past. *Everyday Mathematics* students master math by getting an understanding of basic facts and math skills, rather than simply memorizing numbers.

Understanding a math concept is much more powerful than simple memorization. Students learn the patterns of numbers, using number grids, number lines and other charts. They discover the relationships between addition and multiplication, between division and subtraction. Once they learn why steps are taken, rather than just memorizing those steps, they can extend their knowledge to much more involved problems.

Unlike traditional methods, *Everyday Mathematics* does not rely on "drill and kill" activities. *Everyday Mathematics* provides numerous alternatives to the rote recitation of basic facts, allowing students to not only memorize facts, but also to internalize what is being done. We don't want children to just recite facts. We want them to be able to explain their reasons for their math work.

My child seems to be spending a lot of time playing games instead of learning from a book. Why is that?

In *Everyday Mathematics*, short homework assignments and interactive games are an additional form of individual practice assignments. The time spent playing games very productive. The children are actively engaged, learning cooperatively and developing higher-order thinking skills, all while they think they are playing!

Everyday Mathematics was written for the teacher to guide students through math rather than for children to learn by reading a student text. Student materials were designed as supplements to increase their knowledge.

The pace seems too fast for my child to fully learn the lesson. Why does *Everyday Mathematics* move so fast?

Everyday Mathematics was carefully paced to align with the latest research about how children learn. The approach is much more successful than the traditional method of teaching, re-teaching, and re-re-teaching until the entire class has mastered a topic before moving on. Concepts are revisited in new formats so the level of understanding grows over time.

Beyond improved understanding, this method helps students be more fully prepared for state testing. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics breaks math content into five categories: 1) numbers and operations, 2) algebra, 3) geometry, 4) measurement, and 5) data analysis and probability. The pacing of *Everyday Mathematics* allows teachers to touch on each of these repeatedly, so students are exposed to all of them throughout the year.

Who created *Everyday Mathematics*?

The University of Chicago School Mathematics Project (UCSMP) developed *Everyday Mathematics* as a result of collaborative efforts by researchers, mathematics educators, administrators and classroom teachers. The program has been in development for 20 years as these experts sought ways to help American children become more skilled in math.

Every grade of the program was developed, field tested in actual classrooms around the country for a year and then revised before it was published. The program has proven effective in school districts from New York City to Anchorage, Alaska. Because it's based on research and field-testing, you can trust *Everyday Mathematics* to prepare your child for the future.

Here's what other parents have to say about *Everyday Mathematics*:

"My oldest son had *Everyday Mathematics* in Grade 6 and my younger daughter had it in Grades K-1. When the Home Connections assignments started coming home, I was pleasantly surprised that my kids were being asked to think about things in a different way. The Home Connections are clear, concise and easy for me to understand. And, it got our family talking about topics where normally wouldn't. It's important to set aside one-on-one time in the evening to do the Home Connections together. It's a wonderful way to understand what my kids are learning at school."

-Ann Boeckman, Bexley, Ohio

"*Everyday Mathematics* makes so much sense! I support its interactive, relevant approach to learning math. Math is more than numbers. You have to relate it to daily life and the real world. It doesn't come alive until children see those connections."

-Ida Lo, Bexley, Ohio

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