

## **TUTORING MATH TIPS**

As with tutoring any subject, your relationship with your student is important. But unlike many other subjects, math students are often math-phobic, so it's especially important to encourage them. Tell them that if they don't understand something, they should let you know. I tell my students that it's my job as a tutor to find a way to explain the concept so that they can understand it. Never get upset with a math student for not understanding something! Instead, encourage even the smallest positive thing, for example, that they completed their homework assignment, that they almost got an answer right, that they looked at the problem a different way than you did. The more confidence you give them, the easier it will be for them to learn. Keep trying to explain a concept in different ways if they don't understand it.

If your student is learning concepts before algebra, it may be helpful to get picture books out of the children's section of the library. Be sure to tell the student that you are using these books because math is visual, and books for adult learners tend to use words rather than pictures.

Use visual tools whenever you can:

- Blocks from the children's library are great for explaining volume
- Graph paper for explaining the concepts of area, number lines, and the Cartesian coordinate system
- Children's math books have great pictures to explain beginning concepts
- Math workbooks/worksheets for whatever grade math they're working on

Explain concepts in terms of real-life interests and situations relevant to your student, for example:

- Fractions
  - Recipes
  - Slicing a pizza
- Decimals
  - Baseball batting averages
  - Money
- Percentages
  - Discounts on buying things your student might purchase
  - Credit card interest
  - Baseball On Base Percentages

For great math videos to help you explain concepts, or for your students to use for homework, try The Khan Academy at <https://www.khanacademy.org/> .

Remind your student at the end of the tutoring session that homework is **essential** for them to actually learn the math. They still might not remember what they've learned when they get home and THAT IS OK! When you think about how much practice goes into learning math over 12 years of elementary, middle, and high school, it's not reasonable for you or for the student to expect complete recall and understanding after each tutoring session.