

Improving math and science abilities by

EMPOWERING PARENTS

>> Susan Pettit Riley, PROM/SE
Director of Communications

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY'S PROM/SE project is launching "Mathematics Counts & Science Matters," a new outreach program to parents of children in grades K-8.

The program partners MSU educators with parents, teachers, schools and community organizations to coordinate mathematics and science programs, and lays the foundation for success in school. A pilot project is underway in the Lansing School District with plans to expand the program to other districts in Michigan and Ohio.

Last year, PROM/SE (Promoting Rigorous Outcomes in Mathematics

and Science Education) surveyed more than 2,000 households with school-age children. "The survey found that parents felt higher math was important to their child's future success," states University Distinguished Professor William Schmidt. "However, we also found that parents, especially those with lower incomes, did not know where to get extra help if their child was struggling with math, or how to work with the school to ensure their child took higher level courses."

Mathematics Counts & Science Matters supports the new Michigan high school graduation requirements,

including four years of math and three years of science, by helping to ensure a solid foundation for students in earlier grades. Project consultant Terry B. Joyner remarks, "If we stress the importance of math now, students will be more encouraged to take higher level math courses later during their high school and college careers."

Building on similar efforts surrounding literacy, the program hopes to draw attention to the need for building strong math and science skills through social marketing. "Social marketing involves applying marketing strategies to create public

Help Your Child Along

Step 1:

Start the school year on the right foot.

There is more to "Back to School" than clothes and supplies. Talk to your child about why learning is important and help her set goals for the year.

Step 2:

Get to know your child's teacher and let them know you.

Ask what your child will be learning in math and science, and how your child's progress will be measured.

Step 3:

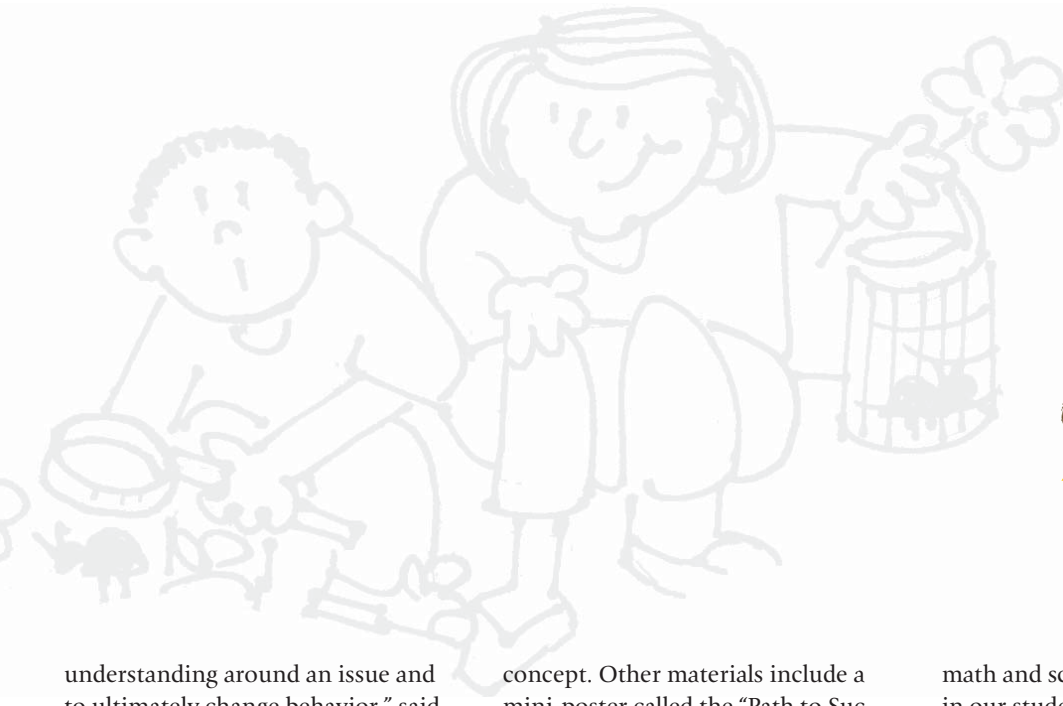
Homework is important!

Be sure your child understands and completes homework assignments. Be available to answer questions and offer encouragement.

Step 4:

Reinforce math and science learning at home.

Turn daily activities around the house into learning experiences. Ask your child to help you measure, estimate, and count. Help make learning fun!



understanding around an issue and to ultimately change behavior,” said Susan Pettit Riley, PROM/SE Director of Communications. “Parents are the greatest influence on their child’s academic success. We want to help parents raise their expectations for their child’s learning in math and science, and arm them with tools to help them along the way.”

The program has developed Parent Guides detailing important mathematics concepts that children should master by the end of each grade. These guides are written in parent-friendly language with examples for each

concept. Other materials include a mini-poster called the “Path to Success” which outlines steps parents can take to support learning throughout the school year. The project also has developed an extensive Web site with downloadable materials and links to community and web resources for students and parents.

Trained parent volunteers will be visiting PTOs, schools and community groups to give presentations that highlight why math and science are important and local resources for parents and schools. “We hope this program will instill the importance of

math and science education not only in our students, but in their parents as well,” says Carolyn Stone, parent involvement coordinator for the Lansing School District.

PROM/SE is a comprehensive research and development effort to improve mathematics and science teaching and learning in grades K–12, based on assessment of students and teachers, improvement of standards and frameworks and capacity building with teachers and administrators.

To download parent guides and other helpful resources, visit www.promse.msu.edu/MCSM.

the Path to Success!

Step 5: Identify problem areas early.

Know your child’s progress and test scores.
Talk to his teacher
if your child is struggling with
math and science.

Step 6: Get a tutor if your child needs extra help.

Many schools and community
organizations offer free or
affordable tutoring.

Step 7: Math and science are important for success.

It’s never too soon to start
talking with your child about life
after high school and careers.