

Real World Math

It's an old adage in the world of education, but it's true: math is all around us. You can try this simple activity with your child to get him thinking about the real world math you use everyday. While you're at it, you're strengthening key third grade math skills that you can expect your child to encounter all year.

What You Need:

- Supermarket ad
- Pencil
- Paper

What You Do:

1. Grab your weekly supermarket ad and look through the advertised specials together with your child. Ask her to circle 5-10 items she likes and then use these sale prices for practice with addition, subtraction, division and multiplication problems. (This activity can easily be substituted with restaurant take-out menus, clothes, game catalogs, or book order magazines.)
2. What's the total cost? Ask your child to line up all the decimal points in order to correctly compute the total cost.
3. How much change? As with addition, line up the decimal points before solving subtraction problems. Then have your child find the amount of change that you would receive from a \$100 bill if you bought one item, two items or all items, depending on the price of the items.
4. How much for five? Your child should solve multiplication with decimal problems in the same manner as he would normally solve multiplication problems, but they must remember to move the decimal point over in the answer as many places as are in the problem. Have him find the total cost of purchasing 5 of the most expensive item.
5. How much if we split it? Division with decimals simply requires your child to include a decimal point in his answer directly above the decimal point in the dividend (the number being divided). Then have your child calculate how much each person should pay if 2 people split the total cost of the groceries, rounding their answer to the nearest cent.



While this activity offers lots of fun and challenge even when it's done occasionally, it's even better if you make it a regular feature of your weekly shopping. Do it often, and your third grader will thrive in math--but even better, will be prepared to be a savvy consumer for life.