

Facts About Mathematics Education in Alberta for Parents



Q. Does my child need to know number facts?

A. Yes. The math program expects students to understand and commit to memory addition and subtraction number facts to 18 by the end of Grade 3, and multiplication and division number facts to 9×9 by the end of Grade 5.

Q. Can my child learn traditional ways of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing?

A. Yes. It is important that your child understand why the method she or he is using works. Your child will be expected to understand and become proficient in at least one efficient and appropriate method. Learning is not one size fits all – students learn in different ways.

Q. Does my child need to use more than one strategy to solve a problem?

A. No. Your child will be expected to try out different strategies and learn at least one efficient strategy well. Once students understand the strategy, they can apply the strategy in future learning.

Q. Does my child use “discovery learning” in math class?

A. Every child learns differently, and a single approach to learning would only allow some students to succeed. The term “discovery learning” does not accurately describe the Alberta math program. Teachers still teach mathematics – students are not left to discover math by themselves.

Q. My child’s homework looks different than what I did. If I’m not familiar with the homework, how can I still help my child?

A. Homework may look different because there is a greater emphasis on understanding the math concepts and applying thinking skills to arrive at an answer.

Talk with your child’s teacher if you have questions about how your child is learning math or about specific strategies your child is using. Your child’s teacher can explain the strategies your child is using so that you can help your child at home. Teachers are the first and best point of contact to help you understand the expectations of the mathematics program.

Q. Where can I find out more information about Alberta’s math program?

A. In addition to working with your child’s teacher, the Alberta Education math web page has valuable resources, including Frequently Asked Questions, videos and Fact Sheets that provide more information about math education in Alberta. See education.alberta.ca/math and click on “Parents.”