

MATH ANXIETY

Enjoy math with, for, and through your children. Yes, you get a second chance. Don't let on to them that you're anxious about it. Act like anything involving numbers, measurement, patterns, or anything else "math-like," is just about the most fun and interesting thing you can imagine.

Many parents with a bit (or a lot) of math anxiety don't even realize how they stiffen up and withdraw when their children innocently draw their attention to something math related. Make a conscious effort to do the opposite. Smile warmly when your child asks a question that just might involve some math. Touch, hug, cuddle! Read math-related stories for fun, just like you read any other stories. There are lots of them, but you just might be avoiding them (maybe not even noticing as your eyes skim past any book that looks like it might contain some math).

Play a lot of games. Don't say, "I don't like games," because that is very likely your math anxiety talking. There are lots of different kinds of games and saying, "I don't like games" is a bit like saying, "I don't like music." Seriously? You don't like any of it? Games are, by nature, fun. The point is to have a good time. So they are very conducive to experiencing some math in a friendly, warm, happy atmosphere. This is good for YOU (well, for your kids, too, but they aren't the ones with the problem).

Use a little self-discipline. Recognize your own urge to avoid math and replace it with a conscious decision to have some fun with it, instead. You might need to work on being aware of the math that is everywhere, for a while (don't point it out to the kids). This is part of your recovery and eventually you won't need to think of math as a separate thing, it will just be part of the world, interconnected with everything else.

Again, I want to repeat that it seems to REALLY help people to share the stories of their own negative math experiences. If you'd like to share yours in the comments to this post, you're welcome to do so.