

BRINGING IT HOME – MATH BACKPACK TIPS AND IDEAS

1. CHOOSE INTERESTING ACTIVITIES

What could be more fun than practicing math with cards and dice? Math games provide a great alternative to paper and pencil homework. The games included in the workshop today will be ideal to get you started and will provide a welcome change from the pressure typically associated with completing homework.

2. MAKE YOUR STUDENTS THE EXPERTS

We have found it helpful to teach the games to the students in class before they are sent home in the backpacks. If the students enjoyed the game in class, chances are they will be excited to bring it home and play it with some family member. This type of “student teaching” in the home environment helps the continued development and understanding of concepts being taught in class.

3. HAVE A BACK UP PLAN

Students can sometimes forget how to play a game. In the backpack provide clear and concise rules for reference. Make sure the necessary materials to play the game are included.

4. MAKE THE PURPOSE OF THE ACTIVITY CLEAR

Included in the handout are a game sheet and table of contents with space for concepts and skills to be filled in. We send these home in the backpack to provide parents with specific information about the activity. Games must be purposeful. Parents need to know how the game relates to the math curriculum being covered in class, and how it will be of help to their child.

5. BUILDING SUCCESS WITH BACKPACKS

Select games that allow students to revisit curriculum topics throughout the year. Build in practice and review with games.

6. PICK A ROUTINE THAT WORKS

Give consideration to your busy teaching life and your student's busy schedules.

Have students select the night(s) that work best for their weekly after school schedules. This becomes their permanent math backpack night.

Seek help from volunteer parents/students for getting the backpacks together from week to week.

Make the backpack preparation part of your math class schedule: Teach game, jot note rules, practice and send home.

GETTING STARTED

1. SELECT 'BACKPACK' CONTAINERS
2. SELECT A METHOD FOR RECORDING
3. START WITH CARD GAMES

Write casinos, visit dollar stores, and collect them from students. Get as many decks of cards as possible. Remember you don't have to play with a full deck so don't worry about keeping them together!!!

4. ADD DICE GAMES TO YOUR REPERTOIRE.

Stick with regular spotted dice. They are easy to find and replace. Collect as many as you can from dollar stores, casinos (sometimes will donate) old board games with missing pieces.

Game #

Skills:

Players:

Equipment:

Rules:

Math Games - Table of Contents

Game Number	Game Name	Concepts Covered

