Parent PIPELINE MATH

ESTIMATE

The ability to estimate is a skill that we use on a daily basis. Learning to estimate well gives students a strong foundation in math that leads to the ability to learn more math as they grow older.

Estimating is considered a higher-level thinking skill. Therefore, it does not always come easily for students. It requires them to use and change numbers in their head, as well as to have a solid understanding of place value and how numbers go together. To develop this useful skill, students need repeated practice using it in a variety of contexts.

Students—and we adults, for that matter—use estimating when we want to check the reasonableness of a solution or quickly arrive at an approximate value. For example, we use estimation when we want to figure out about how much our grocery bill will be, or about how long it might take us to do something.

When students use this strategy, it is important to remember these points:

- It is important for students to understand *why* estimating is a useful skill before they learn *how* to use it.
- Estimating is much more than teaching students to remember, *Five or more? Raise the score. Four or less? Let it rest.*
- We use estimation when we
    - round whole numbers,
    - want to find an approximate solution, or
    - want to check the reasonableness of our found solution.

How You Can Help Your Child with This Strategy at Home

1. When you are shopping, model how you can estimate what your total bill will be by using round numbers (nearest 5 or 10).

    For example, you have items that cost $2.34, $1.50, $5.99, and $11.99. If you rounded to the nearest dollar, your total would be $22.00.

2. After modeling how to estimate your total bill, give your child the cost of several items and ask them to estimate what the total will be. Help them if they get stuck.

3. Show your child a blank number line (see below) and ask them to first mark where 0 would go. Then, have them show you where various values would land if plotted on the number line. (For example, ask, “Where would you place 24? 56? 83?”)

4. Regularly talk with your child about how many miles it might be to a destination, how many minutes it might take to complete a task or to arrive somewhere, how long or tall an item might be, how much something might weigh, and so on.