

Formula Fridays
March 21 and 28, 2014

As we continue to work on multiplication and division in class, it's clear that many students struggle with understanding what these concepts really mean. They now know the algorithm, but they cannot explain their thinking behind using this algorithm. Thinking in math is so important, and while I want students to continue to practice their facts, I want them to explain why they make the "math decisions" that they do.

For the next two weeks, it's time for some Family Math Fun. We use multiplication and division in real life, so let's practice these skills in these meaningful ways too.

Here are some ways that you might use multiplication and division in real life:

- When Grocery Shopping – If you know the price of one item, how much will it cost to get ____ number of those items? Round the price to the nearest dollar for ease in multiplication. OR If you know the price for ____ number of these items, how much will it cost to buy one? Round the price to the nearest dollar for ease in division.
- When Buying A Car – If you know the total price of the car, how much will you have to pay each month (for 4 or 5 years – depending on your deal) to pay off the car? Again, you can round the price to the nearest dollar for ease in division.
- When Redecorating – Multiplication is a perfect skill to use when figuring out the area of a given space or the perimeter of a rectangular space (for crown molding).
- When Cooking or Baking – Recipes often make a given amount of food. What if you want to make more? What if you want to make less? Multiplication and division can help with this.
- When Planning A Birthday Party – It often costs money per child for birthday party outings. Get your child to help you plan an upcoming party by figuring out the calculations for the special outing. Adults and children often cost different amounts, so your child will need to take this into consideration. If there's a charge given for up to ____ number of people, see if your child can figure out the price per person. Your child can even work on the amount it will cost to feed everyone as well. Again, you can round the price to the nearest dollar for ease in multiplication and division.

Pick one of these ways each week, or a way of your own, and work through the problem together. Have your child show all of his/her thinking behind the solution, and bring this work into class by the following Friday. I'm going to tweet out some different "math thinking" so that we can share our learning with others, and have other people reply with their thinking too.

Have fun working and learning together!
Aviva