**Questioning Strategies to promote math skills**

**Help Your Children Make Sense of Math**

**Ask the right questions**

In helping children learn, **one goal is to assist children in becoming critical and independent thinkers.** You can help by asking questions that guide, without telling them what to do.

**Good questions, and good listening, will help children make sense of the mathematics, build self-confidence and encourage mathematical thinking and communication.** A good question opens up a problem and supports different ways of thinking about it. This bookmark has some questions you might try; notice that none of them can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.”

**Getting Started**
- What do you need to find out?
- What do you know now?
- How can you get the information?
- Where can you begin?
- What terms do you understand?
- What terms do you not understand?
- What similar problems have you solved that would help?

**While Working**
- How can you organize the information?
- Can you make a drawing (model) to explain your thinking?
- What are other possibilities?
- What would happen if . . . ?
- Can you describe an approach (strategy) you can use to solve this?
- What do you need to do next?
- Do you see any patterns or relationships that will help you solve the problem?
- How does this relate to . . . ?
- Can you make a prediction?
- Why did you . . . ?
- What assumptions are you making?

**Reflecting on the Solution**
- How do you know your solution (conclusion) is reasonable?
- How did you arrive at your answer?
- How can you convince me your answer makes sense?
- What did you try that did not work?
- Has the question been answered?
- Can the explanation be made clearer?

**Responding**
- (helps clarify and extend thinking)
  - Tell me more.
  - Can you explain it in a different way?
  - Is there another possibility or strategy that would work?
  - Is there a more efficient strategy?
  - Help me understand this part . . .

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Adapted from *They’re Counting on Us* California Mathematics Council, 1995