

## **Science for Kids**

Let your child see you looking at books and magazines, writing letters, and using math in your daily life—for example, planning a budget or balancing a checkbook.

### **Select puzzles and games that interest and challenge your child and his or her friends.**

Examples of games that encourage good science and math thinking are Rubik's cube, Othello, chess, Monopoly, and dice and card games that depend on probability. A computer game, such as Tetris, requires a player to use geometry. Logic puzzles are fun and provide excellent math practice. Children this age may become interested in statistics and make up games using the sports pages. The school or public library may have copies of some of these games that can be checked out.

### **Visit science and technology museums, zoos, and nature centers.**

Museum visits, demonstrations, and classes are places where learning is fun and where middle schoolers can learn in peer groups. There, they can see and do things not available at home or school. Many people who choose careers in science or technology say they first became interested when they visited a museum as a child.

Zakia liked the bird exhibits at the Museum of Natural History in New York City. She wanted to learn more about owls, hawks, and other birds of prey. She begged her mother to let her go to the museum again and to take her two best friends.

In Las Vegas, NM, where there are no science museums or science centers, volunteer parents and students put together the "Exploration Station" in an unused library building. They used the science cook book from the San Francisco Exploratorium to build 25 hands-on exhibits. The whole community is learning science and math by building the exhibits and by playing with them now that they are built.

### **Let your child help with some household finances and repairs.**

Your middle school child can calculate a tip, pay for the groceries, be responsible for the correct change, and figure out the interest on a loan. He or she can plan a savings program to buy something personal, like sneakers or a CD player. Let your child figure out the phone bill and see if any savings could be made. When something needs fixing, like the back steps or an appliance, get your child to help figure out what is wrong and how to repair it.

### **Find another adult who will guide and encourage your child.**

This is the age when peers begin to say that studying math and science seriously is "nerdy." A mentor (a person who encourages and helps students along) can argue that it is a key to a good future. A mentor can be a family member, a neighbor, a teacher, a volunteer from a local business, or an older student.

Meeting people who have interesting careers that use science and math can motivate middle schoolers. Ask the school guidance office if there are career days or mentor/role model programs. Look for people your child can identify with who have careers that use math and science—a pharmacist, an auto body mechanic, a salesperson, a small-business manager, a teacher, a nurse, or a doctor. Point them out to your children. Expand their ideas of possible careers.

**Identify and enroll your middle schooler in after-school, weekend, or summer programs in science or mathematics.**

See if there are science or math clubs at your child's school. Encourage him or her to sign up. Almost every science museum and nature center have programs for students this age. Many have kits that can be taken home