

How Parents Can Support Math Challenges

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SPEAKERS

Adrianne Meldrum, Seth Perler

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- S** Seth Perler 00:00
Hey everybody, what's up? I didn't tell Adrianne we're starting because I know her and like her and wanted to keep her on her toes. Hi, Adrianne.
- A** Adrianne Meldrum 00:09
Hey, how you doing?
- S** Seth Perler 00:10
This is Adrianne Meldrum. She is a brilliant online math tutor, and helper, and genius. And she's got a little company where she helps a bunch of kids all over the place with math stuff. So, hi.
- A** Adrianne Meldrum 00:24
Hi! Thanks for having me today. I'm excited. It's been interesting, right? The start of the school week for most people was this week. And I know my inbox is busy. How about yours?

S Seth Perler 00:35
It's overflowing, and people are having a lot of math problems. So we're gonna dive into some of the issues with younger kids, elementary school and middle school-ish, maybe a little appropriate for some high school parents of high school kids, too.

A Adrienne Meldrum 00:52
Yeah, absolutely.

S Seth Perler 00:54
To my audience, this is Adrienne. Adrienne, do you want to introduce me to your audience?

A Adrienne Meldrum 00:59
Yeah, I think my audience knows a lot about you, Seth, because a lot of them know you and like you, trust you, all of that. But this is Seth. He focuses on executive function. He is the guru who helped my son. I'm so grateful that I know, Seth, and for the work that he's doing, because our kids need him in their lives.

S Seth Perler 01:19
Awesome. And Adrienne site was mathformiddles.com, but you change the name, right?

A Adrienne Meldrum 01:23
Yeah, it's madeformath.com now.

S Seth Perler 01:26
Made for Math. The idea is that your child's brain, even if they don't believe it, is actually made for math when you do it, right?

A Adrienne Meldrum 01:34
Yeah, yeah. When it's taught to the way they learn, yes.

S

Seth Perler 01:38

So one of the things that Adrienne did, and I'm just going to start with this, we're going to talk a little bit about some of the complexities of this fall, but one of the things Adrienne did was put together two resources that you can grab here. Can you show us those?

A

Adrienne Meldrum 01:52

Yeah, let me show you. Of course, these are going to be printable. But you can look at these in digital format, and these are hyperlinks. So basically, on here, we've got some just general math things that you can use and help. And we're all about hands-on math, just FYI, it's not the drill and kill memorization, that kind of stuff. So we've even got Virtual Manipulatives on here for you so your child can drag things around on their iPad or on the computer without having to go buy them. But then down here, we've got some reference books that, you know, I'm old school, you're probably old school, Seth, right? It's nice sometimes to just have like a book to help you help your child instead of going to the internet and going down the rabbit hole of all the options. And then math facts is a huge pain point for a lot of families, so we've got some good stuff here. And then fractions is the number one topic we reteach. Doesn't matter if you are a middle schooler or a high schooler, we're always reteaching fractions. And it's huge. It has implications for a long time, it's important even at the high school level. So fractions are listed here. And then we've got some algebra, some really good algebra stuff. Um, there's a lot of cool apps on here that help with understanding what we're doing in algebra. And then special for Seth's audience, and my people can go get it too, I'm going to give away my signature course, it's self-guided. It's all about fractions because as I said, it's the number one topic. So anyone that uses this coupon code, the coupon code is Sethfff. You can have the course for free, you can go over there and start watching and using it with your child.

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Seth Perler 03:39

What age is that catered towards?

A

Adrienne Meldrum 03:41

No joke, you can use it with fourth grade and all the way up. We teach it in such a way that doesn't feel babyish, you are totally engaged, and you understand what you're doing when you're watching these videos.

S

Seth Perler 03:53

Awesome, show us the other thing. And while you're getting that, I love teaching fractions,

personally. I love it. And I taught math, science, social studies, reading, writing all this stuff. But I love teaching math. I can't teach stoichiometry or high level math, but I can get up into algebra and geometry. And fractions is such a misunderstood concept, But the way that I look at it parents, is that you've got like a bucket and a lot of kids, especially when they get into middle and high school, there's a lot of holes in the bucket. And for a lot of my kids who struggle with executive function, what happens is oftentimes, many of these kids were really doing pretty well with mental math, and then they hit a point usually right at middle school when they have to start showing their work. And, and they don't want too. They miss a detail and they get everything wrong because of one detail, or two details, and it makes it look like they're not good at math, or they start to feel like they're not good at math. Since they miss those things and don't want to show their work, that's really when things can get challenging. These kids memorize how to do multiplication or how to do division, but they don't know why it works. And and I know for Adrienne and definitely for me, it's critical that they understand why. Because then they can use all sorts of algorithms, and have all sorts of ways to approach a problem. There's not one way, which is often a misunderstanding I think parents have, when they see one way taught, they're thinking, "This is the way." No, there's millions. If you understand the principles, your kid can adapt it in all sorts of ways. Sorry for that ranty-rant.

A

Adrienne Meldrum 05:35

No, I totally agree. Someone on my team just the other day, I felt like he made such a good analogy. One of the goals of mathematics is to learn to be a flexible thinker. And people often think, "No, there's only one way to do it." And I've seen these memes circulating around with all these parents homeschooling their children, right? Well, "They're going to do it my way, the way I learned how to do it." But I prefer the flexible thinking, because there's lots of ways to get there. And so the analogy he made was: we live in a world where we have, you know, digital maps. We have multiple ways we can get there, from walking, to biking, to driving, you know, public transportation and different routes and different times. Why can't we have that math too? He was saying maybe that pre-packaged stuff that we learned, you know, the exact method, is not serving our children, they need a more variety of ways of getting there. I totally agree with that. I love that analogy. It really helps me let go of that rigidity that I learned in school, because there's just one way of doing it right. But you and I know how beneficial it is to be this flexible thinker and see multiple paths to getting to the answer.

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Seth Perler 06:43

And especially for these neurodiverse kids who already have outside-the-box thinking styles, it's so great to give them different ways of looking at things. So show us the journal

thing you created.

A

Adrienne Meldrum 06:53

Yeah, sure. So another important thing is, um, especially if you've got kiddos at home, I'm also hearing from parents that they're having like enlightening moments realizing how bad it is right now. You know, like, "Oh, my word, I had no idea my child is struggling this much." So a lot of kids have got a lot of anxiety around math. And with learning, if you're feeling some anxiety, it shuts down everything. You're going to have that fight or flight response and seriously want to run out of the room or you know, meltdown, or whatever it is, freeze and do nothing. So a math journaling prompt is what I made for you. And I realized you've probably got kids that don't like writing, I have kids that don't like writing.

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Seth Perler 07:34

I was gonna ask about that.

A

Adrienne Meldrum 07:35

You could use like Voxer on your phone, voice message apps, you could find ways to talk to each other and make it a safe place. But there's seven different kinds of questions you can go through to help your child. My favorite is at the very top, "Tell me about a time you knew you weren't good at math." And I promise you that a very revealing moment will come to your child's mind, they'll be able to share and talk about it, and let go some of the shame about that experience. A lot of my students tends to be as young as third grade when they're learning their math facts, that's when they adopt that belief. They think, "I'm not made for math, I can't do this." And you and I both know that's not true, because they just encountered an activity with learning their math facts that was working memory heavy. And if you have weak working memory, learning math facts through drill and kill, it's not gonna work for you.

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Seth Perler 08:31

I remember when I was teaching third grade, and we did like a driver's license thing, where they would get like little stamp for when they memorize their one's, two's, three's tables for multiplication. And just being that type of kid myself, as a teacher doing that with my team, and these were awesome teachers, but I just could not digest that. I was like, this is just not working for so many of these kids. They do not respond to getting getting a star for memorizing the thing. Well, I wanted to ask some questions. Oh, I also wanted to say with your journal question, Adrienne and I were talking before this chat today, and she

told me that was her favorite one. I asked a very similar question, even to college kids. And I'll say, you know, "When was the first time that you felt like you weren't a successful student?" or, "When was the first time you felt shame in a classroom?" And they do, they will say, "In first grade, this happened with a teacher, my parent, or whatever. In third grade, or fifth grade, this happened," and they remember. I think that that's a testament to how, something I talked about all the time is the nervous system, how powerful the nervous system is, and how impactful memories are when we feel fight, flight or freeze and it hits the nerve. You're not thinking, "Oh, my kid was in second grade and there was a math experience and that was recorded in the nervous system and it's still impacting them." It is. And you, the viewer, and me, and Adrienne, we all have stuff like that.

A

Adrienne Meldrum 10:03

I still remember mine.

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Seth Perler 10:04

What was yours?

A

Adrienne Meldrum 10:06

So I have a couple, but I'm going back to math facts. Same thing. I'm smiling because it was the FOIL stars. I couldn't do it. I had a terrible working memory, unbeknownst to me. So I resorted to cheating, and I felt deep shame about that, but both my friend and I struggled. So we were like, "Well together, we're smarter," I would find a way to cheat. And that still hurts to think that I resorted to that. I had no idea what to do. I was panicked.

S

Seth Perler 10:34

Yeah, one of my students the other day, one of my middle schoolers, was telling me how easy it is to cheat with the online tests that they're doing now and how many kids are cheating, and how they feel like it's so unfair because if they actually study, and they know half the class is just Googling it while they're taking the test. That's a problem. I want to ask Adrienne what you parents have been asking me. So I want to ask Adrienne about some of the math questions that I've been hearing during this pandemic time with what's going on. So let's start Adrienne with just the problem that parents are having, just figuring out what the heck the assignment is from the teacher online and locating that information? How much time parents or their kids are spending just finding that out? What are some of your thoughts about that?

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Adrienne Meldrum 11:32

Now, I'm going to speak from personal experience, and it may be a little extreme, you might be a little shocked, because I think there's a lot of people that are rule followers, right? They want to do what they're being told. So yesterday was supposed to be a remote learning day for my youngest, and we transferred into a school. So the last time we talked, if you heard me at TEFOS, my kids were doing online school. And then when they announced that they were going back to hybrid in person, my kids begged to go back and be with people. So I let them do that. So we started this week. And what you do is you go two days in person, and then the other three days are at home. So my youngest is a transfer-in student, number one, which is a problem. So the teachers are all forgetting that he doesn't know how to operate the system. And they may have tried to show him but working memory, I don't think he even stored that. So when I met with him yesterday morning and said, "Okay, let's figure this out, what you need to do." I actually didn't even have him stand there and watch me because he was getting so anxious, he started pacing and kind of bouncing and tears are welling up. I said, "Go sit in another room. I'm gonna work on this." So I couldn't figure it out, Seth, I spent 10-15 minutes and then I decided that's enough. I don't need to spend more than that. I messaged one person, which was a friend who's in the district. And I said, "Help me understand this." And she gave me a little more detail. I looked again, gave it five more minutes, and I go, it's not there. This teacher hasn't listed what we need. So I immediately stopped because it's not worth it for me to stress and panic about it. I emailed the teacher, explained what was happening, and let it go. Because the truth is, this teacher is overwhelmed. And my son's overwhelmed. I just need everyone to understand and communicate that we tried, we did our best, but we're not going to let it dictate our day. So I let him off the hook and we will figure it out tomorrow. So in my email to the teacher is very specific, though. We've talked about this. Short to the point, very specific. And I said, "I need to schedule a virtual meeting with you to learn how to do this portal." And I'm still waiting for her to respond. She didn't respond yesterday. I doubt she'll get to it today. I'll probably hear from her on Sunday is my guess. I'm hoping that then I can learn how the portal work. I think a lot of you can relate. I mean, there was like 20 different tiles of things that he could do. None of them very clearly telling us what to do. So we were frustrated, and it's just not worth the stress in my opinion. And I hope I can empower parents to feel like it's okay. This year everyone's frustrated. Everyone's trying to do the best they can. Don't fret about your kid not showing up the way they're supposed to. You know, no one really has time to deal with this. What do you think about that Seth? I mean, that's my thing.

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Seth Perler 14:25

I think you need to communicate with the teachers. I don't know if the video is working properly. Oh, I pinned you, that's why. I wonder if that was the whole time! So basically,

you need to communicate with the teacher ASAP. The teachers are stressed out so always do it compassionately. Always assume positive intent, always assume you're on the same team and you're trying to help your kid. So that's the first thing. The other thing is not all parents, like Adrienne is very tech savvy, and not all of you parents are tech savvy out there. Just do your best. If you have to leave a phone call on their voicemail or whatever, just do what you can. I would not necessarily, well, if your kid is in school, rely on them to deliver a handwritten note. But you can do a voicemail, call the secretary of the school, call the admin. When you write the emails, you know, CC some people, may be CC an admin or a counselor. Not to be a jerk, but just to get some accountability there and have a paper trail, because sometimes you do get the teacher that really is unreasonable. I think that's the exception. The other thing is, is you can send them a Loom. If you don't know Loom, it's free, it's amazing. Adrienne tried to get me to use it for like two years before I ever used it, now I use it all the time. But you can show your screen to the teacher and say, "Hey, teach what's up? I really appreciate what you do. Look, we're trying to figure out what the homework is," and show them you know, "Here's where I'm going. I don't know what the heck you want. Help me here," and you can send off a Loom. Now teachers who are watching this, you can make a Loom, send it to your whole class and say, "This is how you log in. This is where you look, this is when you look, this is how you look." Teachers, you can also say, you know, "If it's taking this long stop," you can give the parents permission to know when to stop. Yeah, the appropriate amount of time and trying. What Adrienne did by taking that off her kid's plate and saying, "I'll figure out what you have to do, I just want you to focus on doing it." So a lot of parents want their kids to go through that whole process. And parents I know you're busy too. I know that it's good to practice the executive function stuff. But your kid only has so much bandwidth, or imagine they have 100 points of energy a day. Once they reach 100 points, they're in overwhelm and reserves, and that's never good. And we don't want them getting in the habit in life. So yeah, that's my my take on that.

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Adrienne Meldrum 16:57

Yeah, I agree. Loom is a lifesaver, I adore it.

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Seth Perler 17:01

Alright, so what about this? This is another one that I've been hearing a lot. Your kid is on the online math class, they're trying to listen to the teacher, they're spacing out, they can't pay attention, it's not engaging, it's not interesting, and there are distractions on other tabs with things that are much more interesting to them, that they're either engaging in or trying to avoid, or whatever. But the point is the teacher is trying to convey knowledge, and it's not getting through.

A

Adrienne Meldrum 17:29

Mm hmm. Honestly, especially for kids with executive function issues, if you have the means I honestly believe you should hire some help. I'm thinking most parents are lacking the time. There's some parents that have the time to sit side by side with their child and help, you know, help communicate that knowledge, help them find online videos, blah blah blah. But a lot of you are like me, and like Seth, and you're working from home too, and you're limited with time. So see if you can find like a college student that would be willing to help your child navigate this math. If you need someone that has more experience, working with someone like us. We help kids with dyslexia, ADHD, and autism really grasp math and what they're doing. We can be the lead teacher, we can be the support teacher, either way. But having someone else can help eliminate some of the stress. There's a lot of this going on with you and your child because you also know how to do it your way. And then the school's probably doing it a slightly different way. And so having a neutral party come in and help can be really amazing because it lowers the pressure and noise that your child might be feeling. It's a better scenario all the way around, in my opinion. So I do that with my boys. When this pandemic started, I put each of my boys, I took people from my team and paid for them to go be with each person. So they had someone to talk to, and all my kids were like, "Gosh, this is great, I'm learning a lot more actually than I am in my class with my peers at the same time." So you're not hurting them, you're not distracting them, or anything like that. It's helping them accomplish that task in a better environment for them because the school is not going to be able to provide that for you.

S

Seth Perler 19:21

Awesome. I was listening to NPR this morning and they were talking about the financial hardships that people are experiencing. They're going through their savings and they really are struggling. So for the parent who is trying their best to do this on their own and learn on their own, where can they go? What are some of your favorite resources that a parent can access? What happens is a lot of times the parents say, "I watched the math teachers lesson, I don't even know what the heck they're talking about." The parent knows that they know enough to almost help their kid but they kind of need to solidify that knowledge. Where can parents go to?

A

Adrienne Meldrum 20:05

Yeah, so like free resources. If you're a military family, the military actually will pay for tutoring. There's like a whole website where they can access an online tutor and get some help. There's a lot of really cool apps, which again, I've got linked up here that can help walk your child through. I'm sure you've seen the app, Seth, that you can scan the

homework problem and it will show you the steps to solving it. Have you seen that?

S

Seth Perler 20:31

I never have. I love Wolfram Alpha, which doesn't scan it for you, but does quite a bit on a free version.

A

Adrienne Meldrum 20:39

Yeah, so I don't have that on here on this one. But I will make sure you guys get the link to it. So it's helpful in that it helps jog your memory of like, "Oh, that's how you do it. I don't remember." And that is an empowering tool you can give to your child to as well, you know that they can scan it. The only issue with it is if the handwriting is really bad, or the print copy they got is real blurry, it might not do it correctly. But for the most part, it works just great. So there's those kinds of things. Another interesting idea that I've seen some of my friends do is for the moms that are not working, and that have the gift of just being able to focus on their children right now, there's a bunch of moms that have banded together and they're helping out their friends. So they're actually taking groups, they're doing the pod thing. And there's no money being exchanged from what I know. They're just trying to help their friends and lighten the load, bless their hearts. Parents like that, bless you. See if you can like find a way to even swap with a parent and say, "If you could take this shift from this shift, I'll do this one." See if you can divide the subjects up too. Maybe you have a strength in English, this person has a strength in science and math. Something along those lines. There's there's a lot of creative ways I think that you can get the help you need without paying money.

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Seth Perler 22:03

Awesome. I also love YouTube. And when I work with kids, to help them find YouTube videos to help them with math, what I teach them is don't just go to the first one. Find a personality you like, a pacing you like. Because it's not just the first one that you find that teaches it, you know, find one that resonates with you. Some are long winded, I can't stand that. But some people like all the detail. I'm long-winded maybe I can't stand it because it's here. But you know, I'm like get to the point and do it fast. Some my kids who like it faster will speed up the video. So you can actually do that in YouTube as well.

A

Adrienne Meldrum 22:45

We love that.

S

Seth Perler 22:46

Yeah, another thing you can do is you can literally type the question into a Google search. You don't need Wolfram Alpha or other things, you can literally type the quote, the exact question in there and click on Google Images. And you'll often find something very helpful.

A

Adrienne Meldrum 23:03

Super true. And then some of my favorite YouTube channels are listed on here, by the way. And I think they're great. And again, you can listen to them at twice the speed if they're too wordy. I love that.

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Seth Perler 23:18

So now here's another problem that I've been hearing a lot is that parents are worried that their kid is going to get behind this year with math. Part of my thinking on that is yeah, you're probably right. Let's get it in perspective, and think about what's most important. So before we started the call, you were talking about what to prioritize and things like that. So when parents are concerned that their kid is going to get behind, and especially parents of kids with executive function struggles that they know that if their kid were focused on the screen and the teacher that they could at least keep pace with what's going on. But it's even worse, not just because of the pandemic, but because they have attentional challenges and executive function. Then they're getting behind and behind behind throughout the semester. So what are some of your thoughts on that?

A

Adrienne Meldrum 24:14

There's a lot of thoughts. Um, you know, we've been dealing with students that have a lot of anxiety too. And when the anxiety is so severe that learning isn't even happening, like they can't even function, which for some kids right now, that is a big issue. Right? Their life feels completely upside down and they lack the skills. I'm thinking about Dr. Greene, like he was saying, we've identified a skill that they need to have. And so I've been advising those parents to do is press pause on academics for a little bit. I had to do that one year. Seth and I were friends this one year for my youngest, we had to kind of press pause on a lot of stuff. And we just worked on anxiety stuff. And it was it's interesting, it's worthwhile work. And I didn't view that year as a waste, personally, because this year I watched him use the skills. So one of the things that he found soothing, this is kind of a tangent sorry, is he needed to reset his nervous system and one of the things I used was a shower. Because when the water hits your head, it helps you reset your thoughts and just watching water go down the drain, I swear it allows him to let the thoughts leave, and wash away. And so

when we were going through the pandemic, he was taking showers a lot, he's taking baths a lot, sometimes four or five times a day. And I was just grateful he had something that was working for him, right. And even when we were moving, because we moved from Idaho to Arizona, he was again, showering a lot, taking baths a lot. And I was grateful for that time that we spent learning some of those coping skills that worked for him. So give yourself permission to maybe focus on some of these executive function skills that your child's lacking. And the anxiety piece, because those two things affect all the other learning. And so if you're finding that your child's got these issues, that's what I would prioritize. But if your child, another thing too, like we get a lot of kids that are we call them ABC kids because they've got all these diagnoses. And it can be overwhelming to know which one do I tackle first? And a lot of you are probably homeschooling for the first time this year. We've seen parents attack them all. Oh my word, it is so overwhelming for students to be doing reading therapy, math therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy, like these kids are drained, they can't keep up. So I would say pick the most important topic. And it's reading, honestly, in a lot of ways. If you're going to pick an academic topic that your kid needs help with, pick reading. Math, in my view, you can catch up with math. A lot of it too developmentally, if they're a little older, we can get them moving faster as they're older. But when they're younger, third, fourth grade, if you're overwhelming them with all these therapies, the progress will be slow. So pick the ones that matter the most. So it could be reading in this case, if they have a dyslexia, diagnosis, and then we can do the math. And I promise, we can help you get them up to speed. So it's I know that's so counterintuitive, because you know, when you find out what's wrong, you just want to attack it all and do it all. And it's too much stuff. Do you agree?

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Seth Perler 27:27

Yeah. And I think getting back to that, you know, imagining that you have 100 points a day, a bandwidth. As an adult or kid, a five year old, a 15 year old, it doesn't matter. We all have like a certain amount. And the way that we've constructed schools, they don't have to be the way we've constructed them. And we've chosen to construct schools where it's very segmented and separated. You have math separate from science, separate from language arts, separate from this and that. That's not real life. In real life these things are all interconnected, and we use them. You know, if I'm going to learn a new thing on guitar, I'm using all different domains or subject areas, but we don't have to have schools that way. But the fact that we do, I think, we've been indoctrinated and this makes it seem like that now, as we're trying to help our kid we have to help in all these different areas. But pick one big thing that you want to focus on for very long, that's what I do with my students, we pick one primary focus. We're always working on all of them.

A Adrienne Meldrum 28:38
You're willing to spend more attention on, right?

S Seth Perler 28:42
Yeah, and it has a positive domino effect on everything else. Working with the anxiety helps, right there, you're gonna be able to get the executive function, the prefrontal cortex back on board, which is then going to allow your child to have more bandwidth for learning.

A Adrienne Meldrum 29:00
Mm hmm. Absolutely. I agree 100%.

S Seth Perler 29:04
There was something else that I was going with this, but it fell off my brain. It'll come back to me in a second. Did you have anywhere else you were gonna go?

A Adrienne Meldrum 29:16
Um, I don't think so. I was just enjoying that chat so much.

S Seth Perler 29:20
I know what I was gonna say. So first of all, many of the speakers on TEFOS this year talked about what you just talked about, picking one thing. And another thing is that less is more. So I have a, a sixth grader, and he started school the other day, and the family switched him from sixth grade to seventh grade math. So now he's been transferred into a new class, and the teacher gave him all the makeup work. So he starts this new class and all of a sudden he has like five assignments. And, you know, I, again, it's a bandwidth issue, you know, I told the parents, I'd rather see him, and I've been working with him all summer on math. So I said, I'd rather see him, do one or two of the problems from each section on all these homeworks, then do all the homeworks. And I'd rather see him do one or two, quality problems, do them really well and be done. And so often, and I remember math came pretty easy to me. And until I got into high school and had to actually write my work, but as a youngster, it came very easy. But I remember having to do these drill and kill sheets, and there be 100 problems. And it was so boring and redundant and meaningless to me. And a lot of times, you know, the teachers are giving this homework,

their intentions are good, but for your child, doing the entire homework and how much bandwidth that takes and time and if they have processing issues, or attentional issues may not be worth it, I'd rather see your kid do one or two things, you know, really be present with them. And I feel like they're gonna get a lot more and you you sometimes just have to believe that you can advocate. Especially if you are a rule follower, as Adrienne said, you have to believe that you can write a note to the teacher and say, "Hey, this what we have the bandwidth for tonight, we needed family time downtime, but we did work on these things, high quality." And if you're CC'ing people, first of all, that's good. But if the teachers really hard on it, and you're CC'ing people you can be like, "Look and work with us here. What the heck," what do you think? And so what what are your thoughts on less is more?

A

Adrienne Meldrum 31:39

Yes, less is more. And I think sometimes I can hear my parents being like, "Well, sometimes even the less, I can't get them to do the less." And so what I would say to that is, um, find a different route. So I had to do one time for my son it again, like Seth was saying, it was just too much. So I became the scribe. I would say the problem out loud, he wanted to practice that mental math. So I'd write down, you know what he said, and he was so grateful at the end. He was like, "Gosh, that was awesome. I didn't have to look at the page." And I knew just even the way the page is formatted was overwhelming, right? It wasn't that there was a ton of problems, just the way it looked. And I think a lot of our kids are like that, they look at the pages and they go, "Oh my gosh, this is gonna take all night," blah, blah, blah. And so finding a different route and way in, setting a timer. I know we talked a lot about clocks. I've been seeing in the TEFOS Facebook group, everyone's trying out the clock method. I love that. Let's set a timer, let's spend some time on this less is more high quality exercises, I think that's great. And even popping in and using some Virtual Manipulatives, your child might really respond to that way more than the worksheet. So you could you could do something like that, take some snapshots of the problem work that he did, and turn that in. I think it's fine to push back on these his teachers that are being more rigid. And this is our year, I feel like, to make some big waves in education and change things for the better.

S

Seth Perler 33:14

I actually think that too. I think that what's happening is a lot of these problems that have been underneath the surface now are coming up. And people are saying, "Wow, the engagements not there." Because I think that's the most important thing is engagement. And it's very, very, very, very hard to engage kids online. So the question isn't, how are we going to engage them perfectly online, it's just what how can we be more engaging? What

what creates engagement?

A

Adrienne Meldrum 33:52

What's the minimum effective dose required? Effective, the minimum one. I think too often, I wish teachers can take the idea from business, a minimum viable product, an MVP. So what's the minimum amount I can do that's going to give my students the maximum result? That's a really empowering thought. And I know there are some teachers that do think this way. There's a teacher group with Angela Watson. She taught this concept, and I love watching the teachers who grasp that idea, especially at the secondary level. And they're like, "Yes, I'm going to do that". MVP this, baby. And I think it's an empowering thing. We can do that too in our homes. What's the minimum amount we can do that can have the maximum output?

S

Seth Perler 34:38

Yeah, and that makes me think of a guitar metaphor that I won't waste everybody's time on.

A

Adrienne Meldrum 34:43

I love it.

S

Seth Perler 34:43

But there is something called economy picking, it's the way you pick a note. For players who play really fast, like bluegrass players or heavy metal players, any genre where they're playing really fast, there's something called economy picking. It's how you barely touches the string less can be more. And really, what I think what teachers go through, and like you said some teachers do get that, but some teachers, especially the rule follower teachers, spend years trying to follow the standards in the curriculum as its outlined. And they're trying to cover all the curriculum. And there's pressure on them from the district from the admin, from testing, there's pressure on the teacher to follow this methodology. And not to question its validity. But so often, you know, and for any teachers watching, I will say this for any subject, less is more. The more you can differentiate content, process, product, environment, and create rubrics and give them flexibility and choice, and make it democratic, the more engagement you're going to get. And so often we're regurgitating what the curriculum is, how the curriculum says this is our research based curriculum blah, blah, blah, that we've somehow magically said this is the best. Meanwhile, every other one says the same thing, we're the best. You're giving

permission to parents earlier, I want to give permission to teachers too to really trust your gut, because you probably know. If you feel you are somebody who's a rule follower, and you're really feeling that pressure, and you may even have literal pressure from admin saying you have to do this. Say, "Okay," close the door, and listen to your gut anyway.

A Adrienne Meldrum 36:40

Yeah. Right. And parents will thank you for it. You know, it's important. Yeah, let's put the kids first this year, that would be amazing.

S Seth Perler 36:51

All right. So final thought what you got for us?

A Adrienne Meldrum 36:54

Um, my final thought is... gosh.

S Seth Perler 37:01

Let me ask you this, I was doing this on the summit and I really liked it. What's your wish or hope for families that are watching right now for today? What would you hope they leave with today? Forgetting math.

A Adrienne Meldrum 37:13

Forgetting math. My wish and hope is that you feel the freedom, the gift of 2020, which is a blessing of time to work on what's needed instead of what's been dictated.

S Seth Perler 37:29

Awesome. And my wish for you today is that you enjoy connecting with your family. Smile, give them a hug, tell them you love them and enjoy. All right. Let me show you Adrienne's, this is Adrienne's MadeForMath site. You can go check her out here. Awesome stuff. This is that Seth's dudes site. If you never signed up, I send out a free Sunday thing. You can sign up right there. There's a million resources there.

A Adrienne Meldrum 38:03

Yeah, Seth, why don't we tell them about two things that we both have going on really

quick. Okay, Seth is doing some coaching, premium coaching.

- S** Seth Perler 38:12
By the time you see this, it'll probably be filled, because it started. My blog goes out Sunday. But yeah, I'm doing a group this fall. But I also have all kinds of other offerings on my site. And then Adrian has her math program this year.
- A** Adrienne Meldrum 38:29
Yeah, yes, we're having these group classes. And they're amazing. They're for the rest of the year, FYI. And I highly encourage you to check them out. We can take math completely off your plate. And for once your kid will get exactly what they need. We teach only the way your child learns, which is a truly magical experience.
- S** Seth Perler 38:51
Awesome, awesome. Thank you so much, Adrienne for being here with me today.
- A** Adrienne Meldrum 38:56
No problem. Thanks for having me.
- S** Seth Perler 38:57
All right, and I hope you all are well. We will see you soon. Take care.
- A** Adrienne Meldrum 39:01
Bye bye.