

Math Alive!

Too many children learn to **fear math in school**. Many are not ready for the concepts when they are taught and many others just don't "catch on" fast enough to stay up with their classmates. Failure breeds failure, **success breeds success**.

So **Math Alive!** started as an after-school program designed for groups of children at a similar level in math understanding. Students are placed together in groups according to their level of expertise rather than by age or grade level.

The atmosphere is positive and supportive. Children compete against **their own** records and are rewarded for improvements, even slight improvements, and for attempting new tasks.

The goal is to make math **fun**. When children begin to have fun, they begin to have success. The more success they have in **Math Alive!** the better they will do in school.

A variety of different activities gives each child a better chance to succeed. Basic math facts are practiced in a several ways, at least one word problem is worked on as a group and then similar problems are attempted individually. Games are employed to practice math concepts. Cooperative practice with two or more teams gives even the poor student a chance to "win."

Students are rewarded for every improvement and attempts at new tasks. Rewards can be in the form of stars on a chart or "play money." At the end of class, students have the opportunity to "cash in" their stars or play money for some small item. When they complete a level of competence, such as mastering X3 or knowing all their addition doubles, they should get a more valuable item or an additional item and receive a certificate.