

Discover what interests your child. It is important to interact with children to observe what interests them & discern what they seem to like & dislike. Once you discover what interests or excites your child, use that as a foundation for exploring critical thinking & as a starting point for learning new or difficult concepts. You can use your child's interests to empower them as learners!

Example: Your child says that he "cannot stand doing math homework." You have learned that dinosaurs seem to really get your child's attention. Use this knowledge as power to motivate learning! *Add different dinosaurs & related vocabulary to story problems.* For example, a story problem says "There are three children in the library. Each child has the same amount of books. There are 12 books total. How many books does each child have?" <u>Adaptation:</u> "There are three dinosaurs in the swamp. Each dino has the same amount of horns. There are **12 horns total**. How many **horns** does each dinosaur have?" With this adaptation, you can also provide scaffolding or clues on how to solve the problem. For example, *if your child does not know where to begin*, you can say, lets sketch three dinosaurs without any horns. Then model how rereading the story problems tells you that there are 12 horns total. Ask your child what s/he needs to find out (i.e. how many pieces of a total belong to each participant). Go one by one to each dinosaur adding one horn until there are 12 total counted. Draw one horn on the blue dino then the red dino then the green d ino then another on the blue dino then the red... until a total of 12 horns is drawn. Then have your child count the number of horns on each dinosaur. Be sure your child uses the clue that there are the same number of horns on each so if one or more dinosaur has a different number of horns, there is likely a math error.

For younger children, you can use dinosaur shaped manipulatives to help solve problems. By incorporating your child's interest into the learning experience, you will foster excitement & help to transform a task that your child found to be daunting to be one which is now tolerable if not enjoyable.

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