CARIBBEAN PRIMARY MATHEMATICS

Second edition
Student's Book 1

Laurie Sealy and Sandra Moore
Children learn Mathematics best when they are encouraged to use it in the world around them. For example, if children point to each button as they count from 1 to 20, it is much better than simply reciting the words one to twenty. If students start to learn to add by using objects which they see and feel, and by talking about what they are doing, they will learn to add mentally in a way that will be useful. The written number sentence, such as $5 + 6 = 11$, should only be taught later, after their understanding of the concept is strong. The same is true for other concepts in Mathematics. First we build understanding, and then we practice the written form.

Parents can help students build their mental Mathematics skills, and their understanding of the concepts of Mathematics, by encouraging them to use their senses as they learn. When walking, help children notice and name the shapes you see. Ask questions to help children think mathematically. For example, draw a circle and look at a ball. Talk about how both the circle and ball are round, but the circle is a flat shape (2D). Ask how the ball is different. In ways such as these, children need to be encouraged to ask questions, to notice details, and to talk about what they know without fear of being wrong. Make up games when you go out, such as counting the number of light poles along a certain road. Or, you might start at ten, and count back one each time you see a white car, trying to see who gets to zero soonest. In this way the concept of zero and the early steps towards subtraction are both practised, in a fun way.

Many adults grew up with the idea that there were rigid procedures about how Mathematics must be taught. Partly as a result, Mathematics seemed hard and fear of failure was high. Now we understand that it is better to encourage students to explore different approaches, and to talk about their reasoning, especially in problem solving. Students today are sometimes encouraged to work with a partner or a group, and to use the language of Mathematics in everyday ways. Working together, trying out different ideas or strategies, giving reasons why the final answer makes sense … these are all important life skills that start at an early age.

When you help your child with homework, talk about ideas and what makes sense. Use objects, draw pictures or diagrams, and be encouraging. Homework in the *Bright Sparks* Workbook ties directly to the lesson that would have been done in class from the Student’s Book. Looking over both together can help students recall the lesson and their steps of understanding.

The Student’s CD gives extra practice on key mathematical ideas for this year group. Students are given different activities, which keeps it interesting, and have challenges to stretch their learning.

Curiosity, asking questions, not being afraid to try out an idea – these are the traits that encourage children to love Mathematics and be successful.
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