

**Q & A—Homework**  
**Ruth A. Peters, Ph.D.**

**Question: “How can I help my child with his homework when I’m not even sure how to do it myself?”**

**Answer:** It's great that Mom (or Dad) wants to work with their young teenager on math homework, but often this is something that is out of their league. Aside from not having studied math for a decade or two, many of us struggled with it in our own school years. Now, several years later, it's difficult to remember, to relearn, or to learn the stuff in the first place! What's a parent to do? Well, start by setting up a good communication system with the math teacher. Make sure that the homework assignment is coming home accurately, and that the math book and folder are also. Ask that your child be moved to the front row of the class so that he'll hear better and not be distracted by those in front of him. Check with the teacher about before or after school tutoring--many teachers offer this on a daily basis and encourage your son to attend these help sessions, even if it needs to be every day for a few weeks until he catches up. Now, for the hard part--your involvement. You can begin to read the book and to follow along with his worksheets, it that's not too time consuming. If it is, consider hooking your child up with a tutor once or twice a week at your home after school, or contact what I call a "study buddy"--a high school junior or senior who will come over a few times a week for a few bucks an hour, or for service hours that many need toward graduation. A good place to find a study buddy is to contact your local high school's sponsor for the National Honor Society. In addition, there are many resources on the web. AOL's "Research & Learn" site is excellent--they have an "Ask the Teacher" section where you or your child can type in an actual question and receive help (not the answer) in terms of how to solve the problem. Also, this web site has all levels of mathematics tutoring available for the student to get additional practice.