

Your First Visit

When you receive your assignment from VIPS, **write a short email** to your student's teacher giving your name and saying when you plan to come work with your student. The teacher may not have time to respond but will be pleased to see you when you come.

For your very first visit, arrive about **15 minutes early** to allow time to **learn your way around the school**. (If you will be coming from work with very limited time for each of your visits, you may want to drop by the school just to orient yourself a day or so before you actually meet your student.)

Sign in at the school Office. Signing in is required for all visitors. In case of emergency, school staff need to know who is in the building. Be sure to sign out when you leave. Note: your sign-in information does not go to VIPS. You will receive an email from VIPS asking whether you visited your student. Replying yes or no each week will report your visits to VIPS.

Ask at the Office where the **VIPS Math Bins** are kept. Borrow some dice or playing cards from the bin in case you have time to play a game; return the items to the bin as you are leaving. (If there is no Math Bin, call the VIPS Program Manager (225) 226-4700 to find out if there will be a bin for your future visits. If you're the only Math Friend at your school, **there might not be a Math Bin**. You'll be able to serve your student well enough following directions for activities in the monthly email from VIPS and on the vipsbr.org website. You'll have more fun if you invest in a pair of **dice** at stores like WalMart and Family Dollar. A small dry/erase board and markers also will be more fun than pencil and paper but optional.

Find the places where you will be able to sit with your student for tutoring sessions. Choose one closest to the classroom or most comfortable depending on how much time you can be with your student.

Go to your student's classroom. Open the door and wait for the teacher to finish what she is saying to the class. Introduce yourself and name the child you've come to help with Math. If the student seems shy or timid, squat down to eye level with the child, smile and say how happy you are to see them and be their Math Friend. Walk, hand in hand, to your tutoring place.

The purpose of the first visit is to make friends. The child is more important than the Math. Begin to establish some comfortable **routines**. Ask how this day is going. (Always ask. Sometimes just a few minutes of listening sympathetically is enough to settle the child down so you can begin to work together. You're a friend, not just a Math tutor.)

Help the student find the day's date on the **Calendar** and write their name there. Introduce the little **notebook** and have the student write their name on the cover and

the date on the first page. These simple routines allow you to observe the student's developmental level. How well can the student write their name? read the calendar?

Use the Math Friend Questionnaire to get acquainted. If there is time, play a short game of cards or with dice to have fun together.

How to Use The Math Friend Questionnaire

Use your printout of the Math Friend Questionnaire as an aid in making friends by sharing some personal information about your family and your favorite things to do. The questionnaire asks for names and ages of brothers and sisters. Those **ages are numbers** of personal importance, which makes them ideal for doing a little math. Which child in the family is the oldest? the youngest? Can you rewrite them in order from youngest to oldest? If the student seems to have no trouble with the tasks so far, move on to addition and/or subtraction: How much older or younger? It's important for the student to feel this is just part of getting to know each other, not a test. However, it is actually your first opportunity to assess what your student knows how to do in Math.

The questionnaire also asks for the student's **likes and dislikes**. Those preferences may help you make Math more interesting for the child. A passion for sports? There are sports numbers you can use: Which team won? By how much? If the student likes coloring, drawing pictures to illustrate number or word problems in Math may be a strength to build on.

If there is time, you can play a short game with your student, such as War/Battle with playing cards or rolling some dice. (Playing cards and dice are in the VIPS Math Bin. Bring your own if you need to save time.)

When your time is up, give your student a **sticker**, say you've enjoyed making friends, and say you hope to come again soon. Please don't promise to come on a particular day even if that's your plan. Your student may have been disappointed many times by adults; please don't risk adding another broken promise.

Next Visits

For the next few visits, your goal will be to continue to develop your friendship while observing and analyzing your student's stage of learning and areas of difficulty.

it's not necessary to continue to introduce yourself at the classroom door. Just briefly ask for your student by name. The other students will quickly learn whose Math Friend you are; on later visits, they will call the student as soon as you appear!

Making a Number Line is a good project to do together.

A Typical Visit

5-10 minutes: Follow the routine you established: How's the day going? Where are we on the calendar? Now let's do some math!

10 minutes: Work together on an area that needs practice, such as Counting, Addition, or Word Problems

(**Always** start with something you're sure the student knows, move slowly into the next level, encourage and applaud.)

Next time, again start with what the student has surely mastered, not their best at the end of the previous visit. This is how your student will grow in **confidence** and **persistence**.)

10 minutes: Play a game (dice, dominoes, other) that reinforces what you're working on--Counting, Addition, etc.

5-10 minutes: If time permits, play a fast, favorite game like the War/Battle card game just for fun.
Stickers!