

“What can I do as a parent?”

By Liz Lawrence

“Parents are always interested in specific strategies they can use to help their children prepare for school,” says Janice Hertzfeldt, Engage Learning Consultant at San Simon School (Sells, AZ) Parent Night on March 13, 2007. Janice was the presenter at Parent Night during her third week of site support at San Simon this school year. Since her first visit in December, she has been working with the staff to gather baseline data in math and to use this data to guide the planning of instructional content and strategies. Janice has coached teachers through the process of using this data to differentiate math instruction, and has modeled mini-lessons and workshops that exemplify differentiation and student-centered learning with the students at San Simon. During her March visit, Janice modeled a mini-lesson on angles in the third grade class that, by the end of the lesson, had the students finding angles in every corner of the classroom.

Janice gave a presentation on the developmental stages of learning in math to the parents and students of San Simon. The attendees also included Frank Rodgers, the principal of San Simon who has worked to develop and support the Parent Nights at San Simon. Janice provided parents with information on what to expect from their children at different ages 4 - 14, and what they can do at home to help their children master the skills and concepts learned during these stages. Janice presented the parents with helpful tips such as what to look for in their children’s classrooms, what questions to ask children when they are doing math, and some helpful websites. After the presentation, each parent received a handout with many activities for children in all grades K-8. Each parent also received a clock, a 0-99 chart, and two dice to take home and use with their children. With support from Diana Johnston, President and Principal Consultant of Engage Learning, and Liz Lawrence, Consultant, Janice split the parents into 3 groups, and each consultant took turns modeling activities using one resource for each group. Some examples of activities presented include:



Parent and child practice activity at San Simon Parent Night.

- Have your child roll two dice and show you which of the two numbers is greater (more) or less (smaller). (K-2)
- Give your child some chips or beans. Tell your child to cover the number 2 and to count by 10’s by covering the numbers. (K-2)
- Set the clock to a specific time and then ask your child what time the clock is showing. Then, ask what time it will be in one hour. (K-2)
- Set the clock to a specific time. Ask your child to tell you the time in military time. (3rd and up)
- Have your child roll 2 dice and ask them to name multiples of the 2 numbers. (3rd and up)
- Say a number and ask your child to identify the number as prime or composite. (3rd and up)

The presentation then moved to the cafeteria where the school had prepared a pizza dinner, and where parents could ask specific questions and everyone could chat. The gathering provided parents with the opportunity to learn more about what is happening in their children’s classrooms, to connect with other parents, and to learn a new idea for practicing math at home.