Welcome to Empowering
Homeschool Conversations,
your authority in
navigating the world of
homeschooling diverse learners.
Featuring Peggy Ployer from
Sped Homeschool,
Annie Yorty from AnnieYorty.com,
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Stephanie Buckwalter from eLARP Learning,
and Dawn Jackson from Dawn
Jackson Educational
Consulting and Tutoring.
With over 75 years of
combined homeschooling expertise,
experiences, and perspectives,
this group is eager to
share their wealth of
wisdom to empower your
homeschooling journey.
So grab your favorite mug, settle in,
and get ready for insightful discussions,
valuable insights, and practical tips.
Give your homeschool the
power boost it needs to
successfully educate the
unique learners in your home.
Hi, everyone,
and welcome to Empowering

Homeschool Conversations.

Today,

we're going to talk about conquering

math anxiety strategies for

frustration free learning.

And my guest today is Amy Sneeth.

After Amy earned her

bachelor's degree in early

childhood education,

her eyes were open to all

that the homeschooling world offered.

Since then, she created Moxie Learning,

an alternative education platform

that offers live virtual

classes for students and

resources to support

homeschooling parents.

Right now,

her and her husband TJ are

spending some time in their

home state of California

before heading out on their

next adventure.

They've lived in eight

states and two countries.

Welcome, Amy, to the show.

Thank you so much for having me.

I'm excited to be here.

Yes, yes.

I was telling Amy ahead of the show,

we haven't talked math in a while,

so it's always good to revisit.

I know we have lots of old podcasts.

but oftentimes you won't dig

through the feed.

So always good to have a new voice.

Search on our YouTube

channel if you're looking

for even more resources for math,

definitely.

It's harder to search the podcast,

but you can still.

So welcome, Amy.

And I always start by asking

my guest a question about

their background related to

this topic we're talking about.

Because a lot of times I

find they're particularly

very passionate because

they can talk a whole hour on this topic.

So they kind of have to be,

but oftentimes it relates

to something in their own

life that has a story with it.

So I love for you to be able

to share that with us.

Totally.

So as a kid, I didn't like math.

I was the anxious math child.

I really struggled, I think,

starting in third grade

when we worked on multiplication facts.

And that just felt like such

an overwhelming task to conquer.

I didn't have a ton of great

strategies for it.

And I watched my friends just kind of

fly ahead with ease on it.

And I was just like stuck on

my freeze facts forever.

And so I kind of like decided then like,

oh, I just might,

must not be a math person.

Right.

Which is kind of a term I hate today.

I wasn't born with the math gene.

It's not for me.

And then I struggled, you know,

kind of all through junior

high and high school in math as well.

And I found I was really eager learner.

But I found that most of the

people who teach math in

schools are math people.

They were people that just

make sense to me like math.

Right.

There was always kind of

that like disconnect of

it's just not landing with

me how they were explaining it,

the verbiage they were using.

Today,

I really like being able to be the

math teacher for a lot of kids today.

who I'm not that I wasn't the math person.

I wasn't just naturally gifted in it.

Um,

so I can kind of meet them where

they're at, um,

which is why what I'm doing.

Awesome.

So how did you get into the

homeschooling community?

What, what sparked that?

Yeah.

So totally on accident.

Um, I, so I graduated, um,

I went to school to be a teacher,

elementary school teacher.

Um, and then when I graduated, my husband,

um,

is actually a professional hockey player.

And so we went, um,
we both graduated college
together and then he got a contract over,
um, in Sweden.
And so we went and lived
over there for a year so
that he could play hockey
and we would experience, you know,
a new country, all these new things.
And I was like, okay, great.
What am I going to do while I'm over here?
How I could still be
involved in helping kids
and the impact that I was having.
Um, and that was 2019 moving into 2020.
So I kind of got into some
online teaching stuff that year.
And then 2020, everything shuts down.
And so many people are
trying to figure out homeschool.
And I was like,
I have knowledge and I can help people.
That kind of...
took me into homeschooling
and just people that I knew
or people that found me
that were trying to figure
out what to do at home with

their kids they weren't
happy with what the schools
were trying to you know
piece together um and so I
kind of totally just
stumbled my way into it and
now I mean I'm four years
in five-ish years in
And and I would never go
back to to public schools now.
I think it's totally where
I'm supposed to be and kind
of helping people be able
to go to school.
Yeah.
Yeah.
Can you explain to our parents?
So maybe that parent is a math person.
Yeah.
And they have a child that's not.
What does that anxiety feel like for that?
You know,
on the child side that the parent
might not be able to understand.
Yeah.
I mean, for me, it was so much that I was,
I thought I was a smart kid.
My parents told me that I
was smart and capable and you can do,

I mean, I really,
really supportive parents.
Right.
And I think so many parents are,
I'm saying all the things I'm, you know,
I'm trying to do all the right things.
And for me,
I'm still just not getting this.
So I must be dumb.
And so I don't want to try
because I don't want to
make a mistake or I don't want to
appear dumb or like there
must be something wrong with me.
It's kind of how I felt
about it because I'm really
trying and they're trying to help me.
It was just this kind of,
this pattern, right?
It becomes a chicken and the egg thing of,
I don't want to try because
I don't want to make a mistake,
but then I'm not, you know,
kind of progressing because
I'm not trying and willing
to make those mistakes.
So, so much of it is really practicing,
you know, having a growth mindset and,

and being,
being okay to make mistakes
every now and then, you know,
I'll make a mistake in one
of my classes and I,
call it out like I totally
call attention because we
all just kind of goof
sometimes right on right
silly things and so
whenever I do or I start
going down the line I go
wait a second this doesn't
seem and I totally called
out in myself to kind of
show I still make mistakes
on this stuff too sometimes
um right nothing to kind of
I try to remove that shame
barrier a little bit
because for me that's so
much of what it was was
that shame feeling yeah yeah you can
You had said that you didn't want to fail.
And I think a lot of times as parents,
we interpret that as they
didn't want to try.
Yeah.
And,

and that's the wrong way to look at it

because a lot of kids do.

And especially those that

are really good in other

areas of schooling,

they just think that

everything should come that easy.

And all of a sudden they hit

this roadblock.

Oh, I struggle in this area.

This, you know,

these twice exceptional learners,

especially as where we see

a lot of these issues pop

up is they do shut down because they

they don't want to look like

they don't know anything.

Yeah.

And yeah.

So, so I love that, that strategy though,

of, you know, well, everybody messes up.

So, so let's just talk through this.

This is what it means.

This is how we move through past that.

And, um,

And that we don't let it get

us all caught up because.

Yeah.

And that can be in or out of math, right?
That can be a recipe I was
making tonight for dinner, you know,
and just showing kids that it's not,
we don't have it all figured out either,
you know?
And I think that's so important.
Yeah.
So when you use this strategy,
how have you seen kids that
come in with like math
anxiety start to open up?
Do you have any story to share with us?
Yeah, it's amazing.
It's my favorite thing.
I always tell my husband at
the beginning of any like
school year or term or
anytime I'm kind of getting
a new group of kids in.
my favorites,
I'm not supposed to have favorites,
but my favorite kids right
at the beginning are the
ones who are like,
I don't want to be here.
My mom signed me up.
And I always kind of try to
like take a temperature a little bit of,

you know, is this your favorite subject?
Is this something you struggle in?
In a really kind of casual way.
And I had one student a
couple of years ago on the
very first day of school said,
I don't want to be here.
My mom's forcing me to be here.
I don't like math.
Like just so out there with it.
And I was like, okay, I was like,
I totally understand.
And I said,
this is going to be like
different than any other
math class that you've taken.
And this is not going to be the same.
We're going to have fun.
We're going to play lots of games.
We're going to go at your speed.
So you're always challenged,
but not too challenged.
And I told him that right on day one.
I go, this is going to be,
I promise it's going to be different.
And I said, so at the end,
the only thing I want from
you is at the end of this term,

I want you to tell me if I
was right or if I totally led you astray.
And I go,
and you can be totally honest with me,
whatever.
So the first couple of weeks
he's coming in and he is
reluctant and he doesn't
want to explain his
thinking or he doesn't want to.
And he wasn't lower in math either.
He was pretty high.
I think his frustration came
from his mind was getting
to answers that he wasn't
showing work for.
And so he'd always been told,
you've got to show your work,
you've got to show your work.
And that was so frustrating for him.
He's like, you're slowing me down.
I don't like this.
This is so painful for me to
go out and write each one of my steps.
So what I did for him and I
do for a lot of my students
is if you can tell me how you got there,
that's the important part, right?
That's why we want them to

show their work so that we can see,
are they getting it?
Where are they making the mistake?
If they are making the mistake.
And that even if they're
getting the right answer,
they know what they're doing.
So they're able to apply
that to everything.
And so he thought that was
just the coolest, best,
like I can just tell you
and I don't have to try to call it down.
And about a month into the school year,
he let slip one of the classes.
He goes, it's over already?
And I was like, oh.
That was exciting for me.
And then he ended up, he moved on.
He went back to a more
traditional school for junior high.
And so at the end of our year together,
he cried in class and said,
I don't want to leave you.
It was really sweet.
And I was like, okay,
like we totally impacted
his perspective and his,

it's just the best, the best.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

It's amazing that, you know,

just that change of

attitude can change so much

in the trajectory of a,

just a learning process for a student.

And we don't often think about that.

We just think if we get

through the content,

but we forget that there's

a whole lot more involved

than just the content.

And,

and sometimes parents will look for

more of a, a curriculum that,

that will help motivate, I don't know,

pictures and things like

that in the books or whatever.

But we don't often think

that the facilitator has

that much of an impact,

whether they're the parent

or an outside resource like you.

But there has to be some excitement.

There has to be some

willingness to bend and move,

because some students can't
do that right away on their own.
So when you deal with, I know I used,
I've tutored math before, just friends,
kids.
Yeah.
I have a background in physics.
And I just remember I would
have to sometimes find
alternative ways to get to
the answer for them because
the first way didn't always work.
Right.
Can you talk through that
process of how some
students aren't always
going to get a concept right away,
especially in math,
because the way that it's a
lot of times theoretical,
they can't picture it in their mind.
So what.
Yeah.
How does that that come into
play with the teaching aspect of math?
Totally.
So I think that there's kind
of a trend in education

right now of let's teach

kids lots of different ways,

which I think is wonderful

and different strategies.

And it's not necessarily

just the way that we learned it.

Right.

Or like a standard.

But let's break this apart.

Let's drop our models.

You know,

it's kind of all these different

strategies out there.

But I believe once a kid has

a strategy that works for them.

go with it.

Like that's the win.

They don't need to learn how

to do it three different ways, right?

It's on us as facilitators

to understand those three

different ways to be able

to kind of present those and see,

or even you don't present all of them,

but the first one doesn't work.

And then you kind of go to the next one.

And then the next one,

and so for me there's

there's such an importance

of why are we doing this
right like an example I use
is um when you're teaching
dividing fractions right
and we can teach okay you
keep the first one the same
flip the division sign to
multiplication right and
then you flip it over
Right.
OK, well,
that's just telling them to
memorize those steps.
Right.
Right.
Why are we flipping it over?
Oh, well,
we're actually multiplying by the
inverse.
Right.
And so why does that work?
And let's do a couple of
examples where they don't
need to write all their problems,
but to show them this is
why we're doing that.
Now they have something to
root those steps back to

like a deeper understanding.

Yes.

But I think is really, really important.

So find a way that works for

them and then go with it.

Right.

Yeah.

And you're moving into more

of the analytical versus the theoretical.

And I think a lot of times,

especially when you get up to higher math,

they teach more of the

theoretical concepts.

And and I know they test on it, too.

And I I always loved hands on.

Love my kids.

You know,

we even did geometry by folding paper.

Yeah.

And and so my kids understood the basics.

I I shared this at a

conference I was speaking at.

I almost thought I had it

had backfired on me because

my son took a college

entrance exam and he bombed.

even though he had taken up

through calculus and I was like,

what is going on?

Then I realized, oh,

I never taught him the

theoretical side of it,

but he's now a biomedical engineer.

Once he, he was able to go, oh,

this is why, you know,

how this applies to this, this formula.

And that connection can be made that way.

Whereas the reverse,

if they don't have those kinds of basics,

then it's like,

they're just floating in nothing.

Yeah.

Yes, exactly.

So,

So yes, I, yeah, it, I,

I like that you pointed out

there's lots of different ways.

Cause I think we do, we,

we pick those curriculums.

It's like, oh,

we're going to teach them everything.

And it can be overload at a point too.

Yeah.

Where it's like this part,

this made sense to me and I

was totally tracking, totally tracking,

totally tracking.

And then we just switched

the pitch on them.

Right.

And now also this, are these the same?

Are they different?

Why does this one?

I was fine here, you know?

And I think that's where

common core gets kind of a bad rap.

Because they are worried about making sure,

you know,

why things work and how it works

together and really doing

like a deep understanding

as opposed to just memorize

these algorithms,

which I think can be a great thing.

But then a lot of times we take it too far,

right?

My mom always says education

is like a pendulum.

It's one extreme to the other.

Just right here.

Exactly.

Where it's like, yeah,

introduce them to a couple

of different ones because

they're all going to kind

of grasp different things

differently and they're going to
hold on to different things.
And that's great.
Then let them have that
success and just go with that.
But that's kind of my happy medium there.
Yeah.
So how do you know if you've
spent enough time on a specific topic?
And then when do you need to revisit it?
Because that is a question I
get from parents all the time.
It's like,
do we have to have a math program that,
you know, builds that in?
Or how do we go about if our
math program doesn't to
revisit concepts so that
kids don't forget them?
There's a lot of kids that that were
are in our community,
maybe have some memory issues, um,
or they just have gaps in, um,
their brains or in, in their, um,
just in general understanding.
And so a lot of, a lot of times,
sometimes you'll teach
something and I talked to

parents over and over again,

I taught this,

they had it yesterday and

today they don't have it.

Right.

Right.

So I think to really force that, not force,

but encourage,

I should say that deep understanding.

I have kids,

even if they're showing all their steps,

tell me how you got there.

So a lot of times my kids

will actually do fewer practice problems,

but we'll go deeper kind of

on each one where I say, OK,

that's great.

You got your answer.

And I'll let them kind of

work it out on their own

and stumble through it and

self-correct and those things.

And whether the answer is right or wrong,

I'll say, tell me how you got there.

And a lot of students,

when they first come to me, they think,

oh,

I got it wrong because I asked them

how you got there.

And I go, no, no, no.
You got it right.
Tell me what, tell me why, tell me how.
And then I find that lots of
times they did get the right answer,
but their why just wasn't solid.
And it kind of,
they happened upon the
right answer a crazy amount of times.
It shouldn't work out as much as it does.
Where it was like, oh wait,
we were missing this whole step.
And so that worked on this problem,
but it's not going to work
on the next one.
Right.
Um,
that's a factor in making sure that
their understanding is really deep.
The whole time is having
them explain most problems
they're doing to you,
as opposed to having them do, you know,
15 problems on a worksheet.
I'd rather have five and be
explaining them to me and really,
really deepening that understanding.
And then once they have it,

and they can tell me
they're getting consistent right answers,
they can tell me why I
don't need them to do it 15 more times,
you know, especially younger kids, right,
who their attention spans are shorter,
you know what I mean?
Like, right.
That's great.
Let's move on.
Or let's put math away for today,
because you crushed it, you know?
Yeah.
And so I think that's kind
of how I'm assessing all
the time is just having
them that constant feedback.
And then I can go, oh, but wait,
do you remember this part?
Or when we have, you know,
equivalent fractions, what do we do?
You know,
and I can kind of be correcting
those things as they're coming up.
And then as far as kind of circling back,
I like to dive really, really deep.
So I lean towards more
mastery-based curriculums,
just my personal preference.

Right.
Because I like the ones that
go really deep, spend a lot of time,
and then we move on.
But a lot of times in math,
most of it's building, right?
So even if you moved on from
this chapter that was on
decimals or that was on fractions,
you're going to probably
use that coming up pretty soon.
So before I ask my students
to kind of use those things
again or pull them out of their toolbox,
we kind of do a review of,
now let's remember what do we do with
equivalent fractions or how
do we turn you know
improper fractions into
mixed numbers before we
jump into the chapter
that's on adding mixed
numbers right like let's
right have all those just a
quick you know one day
maybe or even just the
beginning of a lesson brush
up on those skills where

they're going yeah oh

that's right you know

because it is right even if

they seem like they totally

forgot it it's in there you

just have to kind of

pull that out of them a little bit.

So that's kind of how I work

review in all the time is

just when it's coming up again,

because it will,

that then we're kind of

brushing up on what we did,

maybe last chapter,

maybe two chapters ago.

Exactly.

That way.

Yeah.

Yeah.

No, that makes sense.

Because yeah, you do continue to use it.

And I think a lot of parents

do get hung up though on that

well,

what if we get something new and they

don't remember it,

but you can stop at any

point and then review right there too.

And it most likely will take

one day of review or maybe
two days of review, but something,
you know,
they did more at the beginning
of the year and now we're
pulling it back out.
And, and that's okay too.
And that's to be expected, you know,
they're, they're kids.
And even for us, you know,
if we haven't read a book in,
in years and years, right.
You kind of remember the gist,
but you're kind of, Oh yeah.
Mixed with another story.
Yeah.
Yeah.
You're kind of like,
but as you're reminded of it, it is,
it is in there, you know,
so we kind of have to brush
up and that's not going backwards.
Right.
And so that's a little bit
of a parent perspective too.
You're not, you
You're not losing.
You're not falling behind.

You're not going backwards.

That's just a natural part

of math and learning.

Right.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I was sitting next to a gal

on the plane the other day

when I was flying home and,

and she had a math paper work pulled out.

I said, what are you working on?

And she was doing college algebra.

She's like, Oh, I said, well,

if you have any questions,

I could probably answer them.

And so she leaned over at

one point and she goes,

what do I do with this?

And it was like a sign to the negative.

And then a fraction inside of, I said,

look at your calculator.

Yeah.

Yeah.

You just got to put it in.

Even just reminding kids, right?

Like this is how we put

these different things into

our calculators, right?

Where they go.

Right.

Oh, and they're so complicated now.

I was amazed when my

daughter started doing college algebra.

I was like,

Wow.

It's yeah, pretty crazy.

So it's good to have some

help on that one too.

Yeah, for sure.

So, you know,

there's lots of concepts that

are really difficult to

understand in math.

What ways can parents help their students?

You know, what,

what other types of like

scaffolding or helps are

there where you can take

something that's in a

workbook and just expound

upon it to make it help make, you know,

other learning styles, um,

just it easier to, to comprehend.

Yeah.

So kind of two answers.

One is if you can make it

kind of like you were talking about,

like even up through
geometry where we're
cutting out shapes or making angles,
right.
And then folding things, you know, um,
There are a lot of,
and that's just a quick Google search,
right, of your, you know, topic hands-on,
something like that,
that can make it really like, oh,
I can see it.
Anytime kids can see it.
And eventually, you know,
you talk about really high-end math,
college math, that stuff.
Eventually, you kind of,
it's harder to have.
Right, but it's still graphing,
the graphing calculators and even Excel.
I was amazed that Excel
could do so much of that.
Yeah, but there are pieces, right,
where you can go, okay, I can see it.
And so I think for a lot of
kids being able to see what
we're really talking about, fractions,
if we're cutting things
apart or multiplying
fractions versus dividing

fractions and why does one
get bigger and one gets
smaller and it seems like
it's either first, you know what I mean?
It seems like that where you
really can either draw
pictures or grab a
Hershey's chocolate bar and
be breaking it apart and
make it so that they can see it.
The other strategy that I
like to use a lot is make
it relevant to them.
like when we're talking
about multiplication and division,
where do we use that?
Where do we see that or
fraction or decimals, right?
Where do we see that,
that they would be familiar with it,
right?
I talk about multiplication
a ton just because I think
it's such a sticking point for so many.
And it was for me, you know,
memorizing all those facts
and everything.
And what I tell parents is that,

has to build their
foundation to be so strong
that by the time they're
memorizing it's anchored
into something right or
we're having a whole
brainstorm party before we
start solving anything
we're having this whole
brainstorm party of where
do we see multiplication
and it's buying hot dog
packages for the fourth of
july and it's making teams
and it's planting flowers and rows and
And make it so they go, oh, okay,
I can see that.
That's relevant to me, right?
And it's not just something
that we're doing in a math book.
Or I had my students,
we were doing percentages
at the end of the year.
And I said, I want you to,
and everything I do is virtual, right?
So I said,
I want you to go find something
in your house that has a
percentage sign on it.

We're going to race,
go grab something and bring it back.
And the things they brought
back were hilarious.
I mean,
it was like a milk carton they
brought back.
someone had like a melatonin jar that said,
you know,
a hundred percent natural or something.
And so they brought all
these different things back and it's like,
see, this is all around.
It's not just on tests and
it's not just in textbooks, right?
These are things that are around you.
And then they're going, oh,
they're recognizing it.
They're seeing it around them.
And all of a sudden it's
relevant and they can tie
it into something where
it's not just made up thing
that only appears in math books.
I think that's super important too.
Absolutely.
Yes.
To be able to point it out.

I know oftentimes I would
take like in word problems,
the characters,
my middle son just could
not get past sometimes the
wording or the examples
that were used in them.
I'm like, okay, what does he really like?
Superhero.
How can we change this to
something about superheroes?
And it's amazing just how
the brain just lights up.
And all of a sudden they're
totally bought in.
We did a whole,
I had a bunch of football
players in a class and we
did a whole Superbowl kind
of themed thing.
And we had teams and it was,
who are you going for?
And we were doing data with it.
And it was super fun because
they're instantly bought in.
They care about it, you know,
to make it relevant to
something that they care about.
They're going to be excited.

You know,

you're excited because they're

excited about it.

You know,

everyone's having a good time at

that point for sure.

Yeah.

Yeah.

That's that's a good example.

I was teaching at a

conference in Iowa last

week and I teach parents

how to do a unit study

based on their their

students favorite topics.

And it was the one mom chose football.

And she's like, we could do statistics.

We could do interviewing skills.

We could, you know, be your coach.

We could do video editing.

And she was just like she

had so many ideas.

And I was like, yes,

you could make an entire

high school unit study for

an entire semester just on

football if you wanted to.

Yeah.

And I think you forget about it.

in that way, right?

Like we're looking for those examples.

They're everywhere around us, right?

Oh, they are.

Absolutely.

Once you see it, they're there.

Yes.

And plus,

that's where your student's going

to want to apply almost

everything that they're

learning is in those

subject area or those topic

areas that we sometimes

dismiss as parents and educators that, oh,

yeah, that's your extracurricular stuff.

But what if they make a career?

What if they spend more time in that?

They have to see the connections.

Yeah, absolutely.

That's really cool.

So multiplication,

you've been talking about it for a while.

Why do so many kids struggle

with multiplication?

So I have a theory, and that is, you know,

multiplication is typically

introduced end of second,

kind of beginning of third grade.
And that's the first time
that these kids have had to
memorize multiplication.
anything of that magnitude.
They had to work and become
fluent on addition and
subtraction within 20.
There's such fewer facts
there than all of these
multiplication facts.
And it seems like there's
even more facts than there are.
It looks like if you look at
a multiplication chart,
it looks like there's 144.
Well, there's so many that are repeated.
There's only 78.
But it seems like there's
all of these facts.
So it's this really
overwhelming task for them.
And
they don't a lot of times
have great study skills yet, right?
They maybe have very limited use of,
you know,
working with flashcards or

really trying that like
intentional practice, right?
When we're trying to learn
something or memorize
something or really remember it, right?
We're sitting there and our
brains kind of know how to, okay,
we're paying attention.
We're really trying.
And I remember I was
tutoring a student one time
who was kind of struggling on,
on facts and stuff.
And I said,
now I said his name I said
you know we're trying to
remember this that you
remember it like even
tomorrow right like it was
like you know it was like
this total oversight that
he's like like I'm supposed
to remember these like next
week when you come and I
was like yeah and he was
like huh and I was like you
know because he's going
through these things and
it's like this temporary

you know, oh,
I'm just trying to remember
it while we're playing this
game or we're doing this
exercise or whatever.
And it's like,
so eventually like this is the goal,
right?
But you want to present it
in a way that's not so overwhelming.
We're going to do lots of practice.
We're going to get there together.
We're going to chip away at it.
I think having any kind of
visual representation of like,
look how far you've come.
Look at the fact that you already know.
Because it seems like this
really terribly overwhelming task
And I think that a lot of
things that we do sometimes
as adults or the ways that
we were taught it, that we just think,
let's do it that way.
It's just the way you do it.
Yeah.
That it's the super overwhelming thing.
You know, when I went to school,

I got stuck on my threes

because I had done my zeros,

which if we have this, they're easy.

Yeah.

We're picturing what multiplication is.

And we made all these examples and

And I say, you know, okay,

if we have a plate with

zero groups of seven muffins on it,

how many muffins are there?

What?

You know, there weren't any muffins.

Right, exactly.

It's a whole new language.

But it's an easy one to get

the right answers to.

And then you go to ones.

And again, like easy pattern to follow,

but I wasn't really picturing anything.

Well, twos, that's just doubles, you know?

So I knew that from addition.

I got to my threes facts and

I knew nothing about multiplication yet,

right?

And so I didn't have any strategies.

And so I tell parents all the time,

Teach facts in order that

makes sense where you're

building their momentum.

Do tens first and twos and
then fives and then eleven.
Like go in an order that
they can be building momentum.
And then when they get to
the trickier ones, right, you're going,
well, you already know, you know,
three times ten, three times five,
three times two, three times zero.
You already know half your threes.
Right.
So you're just having to learn part of it.
That's super important that
we're taking away their
overwhelm because it's just this big,
scary task to them until we
show them and kind of scaffold into them.
You know,
we're going to take this one step
at a time.
We're going to build momentum.
Look how far you've come.
We're doing great.
We're chipping away at it.
Yeah.
Do you encourage skip
counting at all for some of those?
Yeah, I like skip counting.

I don't think that skip
counting is the only
strategy that you should.
Right.
Yeah.
Right.
So like if there's skip counting for tens,
that's great.
As long as we're tying that
skip counting into, you know.
we have 10 groups of five
things or five groups of 10 things or,
you know, that they're,
as long as they have that foundation,
I think skip counting is a
great strategy until
they're getting that full, full fluency.
But I like to teach, you know,
my 12 SPACs,
And I teach them pretty early on.
I teach them as 10 groups of
something plus two groups
of something because they
already know those, right?
And that we're putting them together.
And so that's a strategy
that you can use with a lot of them.
With nines,
you can do one group taking away.

Or with sixes,
you have fives plus one more group.
So I think there's lots of
strategies out there.
And it's kind of like what
we were talking about with
the different methods that
you're going to teach your
child to do math in.
Some are going to click and others aren't,
right?
It's kind of on us to
introduce different ones
and then see what works for them.
Skip counting by sevens
makes no sense to me, right?
I never learned how to do it, right?
If I'm skipping by sevens as an adult,
I'm just kind of doing, okay,
seven times one, seven times two.
Right, exactly.
But if your kid is a child
who's going to hear a song
or a jingle and that's
going to be forever in their brain,
use it.
There's nothing wrong with that.
Exactly.

So, yeah,
it's a strategy that I will introduce,
but it's not the only
strategy that I try to
introduce other pretty
early on so they can kind
of figure out what works for them.
And for me,
different strategies work on
different times tables.
OK, that's good to know.
Yeah.
Yeah.
And even, you know,
as you were talking about it,
what came to my mind was, you know,
each of those strategies
you use or at least most of them,
probably not the rhyming one.
But they will translate to a
later math function like skill.
And so it isn't bad that
you're teaching them these
concepts because they're going to learn,
oh, when I do this,
that was similar to skip counting.
Yeah.
Or whatever else they were doing.
Yeah.

Or even, you know,
I'm breaking numbers apart.
I'm putting them back together.
Those are great mental math
skills that can be used for
all sorts of different math concepts.
Right.
And I think a lot of times we think, oh,
if I'm teaching my kids how
to use these helps,
that it's going to be a detriment.
But in a lot of times,
you're really just
advancing their skills and
teaching them kind of what
they're going to learn down
the line anyways,
when they start working
with bigger numbers.
Yeah.
And you're building their number sense too,
right?
And
how numbers can be, you know,
flexible and how we can manipulate them,
you know,
to do what we're trying to do with them,
which I think is super

important at all ages.

Right.

Yeah.

Yeah.

So we had a parent, um,

a couple of weeks ago on our new platform,

say, you know,

she like thought she had

found like the most amazing

way to go to school.

And she just started talking about games.

She's like,

we switched to doing everything

with games.

So why are games so important to you?

with, um,

teaching math and how do you use them?

Games are the best.

Um, a kids like them, right?

They're just drawn to it.

Like, okay, we're going to play a game.

I mean,

it's the same thing you're going to

use with, you know,

your toddler who doesn't

want to clean up their room

and you're going to go,

let's make it a game.

Let's see who can, you know,

clean up the most in the
next two minutes or whatever it is.
Right.
Like you use this as a parenting strategy.
why not use it as a learning strategy?
I'm more apt to do something
if it seems like a game or
if there's a little bit of
competition built in.
You know,
I like to kind of pull out my kids,
you know,
competitive sides and let's kind of,
let's make this math class, you know,
we'll break into teams and
we'll see which team can, you know,
and I try to keep my games
to not be so focused on like results.
So what I'll do a lot of
times to make something into a game is
is I will have my kids either in a team,
because I like to do things
in teams where that way
they can be talking to each
other about the math that they're doing.
So if they're solving it together,
talk about it,
especially because I'm on Zoom.

They learn so much more.

Yeah, especially because I'm on Zoom.

So they can't see each other's papers.

So the,

the amount of communication they

have to be having, and I,

and I force it to,

at the beginning of the year,

because they'll come back

and I'll kind of have an

idea of who probably wrote it down.

And then I'll ask the other one,

can you explain to me what you guys did?

And they go, uh,

and the other one tries to jump in.

I go, oh,

you guys don't seem ready as a team,

you know, go on back.

And, um,

so they're talking about it at a time.

But what we'll do is I'll

have them either on their

own or in teams.

Okay.

Do this practice problem.

And then when you come back to me,

you're gonna explain, you know,

how you did it, what answer you got.

And then once you have the correct answer,

no matter how many tries that takes you,
right.
Once you have the correct
answer and you know why
you're going to spin for points,
roll dice for points.
Um, I have a sticky note game.
I call it stinky feets where
they pick sticky notes and
they kind of reveal like
different point values on the back.
Um, so anything where they're,
they're earning points.
It's not at all tied to who did it faster.
It's not at all tied to who
got the correct answer faster, better,
anything like that.
There's an element of randomness to it.
So one team isn't just
blowing the other team out
because they're a little
bit more confident in this chapter.
And when I have one-on-one stuff,
I do the same thing.
They play against me.
So they'll do the problem.
They'll tell me the answer.
They'll explain how they got there.

Sometimes, depending on what it is,
I'll do it too.
We'll compare our answers to
make sure we both have the right answer.
And then when we both have
the right answer, we'll spin for points.
We'll roll for points.
We'll do something where
we're earning points.
And there's a little bit of
competition built in.
There's kind of a reward
that's coming into play for our brain.
We're processing it that way.
So it's just their buy-in is
higher because they're
trying to get the right
answer so that they can...
you know, that, right.
And it's not the right answer is not the,
it's the goal, but it's not the reward.
And I, and so for kids,
especially that have anxiety,
that takes a huge weight off.
Yeah.
Whatever,
however long it takes and however
we're processing it,
like your reward is for the

work that you put in.

Right.

Right.

How, how hard, you know,

it's so amazing how hard

you worked on that problem.

Let's spin.

And then we'll go on to the next one.

Right.

Yeah.

which I think is really cool.

And there's all kinds of

games that you can play

that is specific to the

topic that you're doing.

There's great area and perimeter games.

There's great counting games.

There's games that are

specific to the topics.

But I like to play games

all the time because it's fun.

You know, it's fun for me too, right?

I'm a former athlete.

I still have a competitive side,

but I don't get to exercise a ton.

So I like to, you know,

kind of build that

relationship with my kids too.

And they're having fun.

We're doing something together.

Yeah.

And it's just, it's fun for everyone.

And it gets you out of like

worksheet marathon, right?

Where sometimes in math, it's like,

it's so easy to just, you know,

and they might be doing

problems from that worksheet, right?

Because those are great practice problems.

But there's something on top

of it where we're not just

doing a worksheet for the

sake of doing a worksheet.

And they're, you know,

kind of encouraged to do

well and get the right

answers and have that deep

understanding because

that's what gets them the

points or that's what gets them the role,

which I think is really important.

Yeah.

There's,

there's so few kids that find

completing a worksheet as a

rewarding thing to do.

I mean, I'm going to do it and they go,

okay, great.

We can be done now.

It's like,

was that the message that we

wanted to see?

No, exactly.

When you're, when you're in a routine,

you know,

you might start out super strong

in August and September and then,

you know,

January rolls around and you're

just in this, like, you know,

you're bored with it and

they're bored with it.

And that's when that

friction I find starts to come up of like,

they don't want to do it or they're like,

I don't know.

Right.

Exactly.

I'm checked out.

Not here.

Right.

We have to bring the enthusiasm to math.

I tell parents all the time, if you,

if you hate math,

your kids can never know, you know,

just fake it,

fake it until it's fun for you too,

you know,

and then they'll have fun and

you're having fun.

And all of a sudden it's not

even about the math,

but we're learning together.

And that's.

Yes, exactly.

Yes.

And I think that's always

the best approach for

homeschool parents is you

are learning in the process too.

And if you forget that you

lose out on so much.

Yeah.

It's a shared activity with,

with your student for sure.

So in setting up a lesson plan,

Um, what,

are there any things that you say

are must or not to do?

Yeah.

So I really like, I kind of, so I teach,

um, third through eighth grade.

So I have kind of a wide

range of ages and levels

and topics and things like that.
But, um, but most of my classes are,
are structured pretty much
following the same, um, format.
And so what that is,
is I have them start out with a problem.
And that might be an example
problem or a think problem
in your curriculum,
depending on kind of how it's set up.
That's introducing the new lessons, right?
Which is probably building
on what you did yesterday.
So I give that to them with
no instruction.
And so this is another way
that I kind of build in
that growth mindset.
You're not even supposed to know,
make your best guess, right?
Because then they're problem
solving it and they work through it.
I don't make them do it for 10 minutes.
where they're just struggling.
But I give them a few
minutes to kind of think through it.
What do you think you should do?
Can you get started?

Which is an immediate assessment for me on,
can they apply what they
learned yesterday?
to today's, right?
What connections are they making?
What connections do I need
to help them make?
Because a lot of times
they'll surprise you with
the just guesses of the
next logical thing to do,
but they'll know and
they'll put those pieces
together and it's amazing.
And that's an opportunity to go, wow,
I didn't even tell you that yet.
That's so cool.
And if the reverse happens
and they totally get stuck
and they kind of try a
couple of things and I
encourage them to try something,
even if it doesn't work out, just try it,
right?
That's giving them that opportunity to
to kind of to fail with very low stakes.
They're not supposed to know, right?
So there's no fear there.
And so I have them try it

because that gives me
guidance for what I'm going
to do for my lesson.
That tells me exactly what they know,
what they don't know,
what connections need to be made,
which is important because
sometimes we assume they
don't know this yet and they do.
Or we assume they totally
know this and they don't, right?
That's not going a little
bit backwards and what
skills do I need to brush up on?
What parts do I need to do?
Yeah.
So after that, then I,
then I'll teach and I'll say, okay,
let's do problems together.
Let's work through it.
This is how we do this.
This is why we do this, whatever.
And then I have them, you know,
tell me what to do on a problem.
So I'll say, I love that.
Where they're kind of,
that's my scaffolding of, you know,
it's kind of a, it's an, I do, we do,

you do method, right?

Where I'm doing it first.

Now we're kind of doing it

together and I'll do this stuff.

What should we do next?

What should we do next?

And then I turn it over to them,

have them show me that they

can do and truly like a problem,

maybe two.

Then I jump into a game.

The majority of my class,

the second half of my

classes are we're practicing,

but we're doing it through some game.

They're excited.

They're having fun.

Um, so it's not just, okay,

now do a bunch of those.

Right.

Exactly.

Yes.

Yeah.

I structure my day and I

found a ton of success with

it at all kinds of

different levels and all

different things.

Yeah.

Yeah.

What what do you say is, you know,

for different age levels,

it's going to be different.

I know.

But as far as like doing

practice problems on their

own after a lesson or like

homework or whatever,

what what is is do you have

a general rule?

I.

Don't love homework for my

ages because I think, you know,

if they've done the lesson

and they might be doing

some things independently.

And I think that independent

practice is important, right?

Where they're doing it and

maybe you're helping

another kid or they're doing a problem.

And that's where, I mean,

the games that come into play,

they're really doing it on their own.

You could be playing that

game with multiple

different age kids that are

working on totally different topics.
But they did one or two
problems and they did one
or two problems.
And then they, you know, ran up and they,
you know,
spun for points or something
where they're having independent practice,
which I do think is important.
But my thought on homework
beyond that is a little bit
of if they know how to do
it and they're just going
to do the 10 problems perfectly,
they probably didn't need
to do the 10 problems
because they already had it.
And if they don't know how
to do the 10 problems,
then they're either going
to struggle through it
painfully and hate math,
or they're going to
practice it 10 times totally wrong.
And so neither,
like on either end of the spectrum,
it's not super helpful.
Right.
Yeah.

I love to hear you say that
because I think a lot of
parents think there's
learning happening and
there's not in that time.
And,
and so it really is a waste of time or
you're, like you said,
you're working against, um, progress.
Yeah.
And I think parents too
sometimes will think like, okay, well,
I have the book,
so they have to do every
problem in the book.
My kids don't.
When I went to school, we didn't.
You know what I mean?
Like it's not there.
And you think if you're a
curriculum company and
you're creating a textbook or something,
you want to have enough problems.
You don't want to run out
where a kid still needs
repetitions and they don't have any left,
which happens sometimes.
Yeah.

But but for the most part,

they're trying to give too much.

Right.

Yeah.

But of course,

your child could be going

back and doing every single

problem in the book.

It's it's just not totally necessary.

And I think it can be it

could be a reason kids, you know,

start to not like math, which I hate.

Exactly.

Yeah,

I'm a little bit I'm pretty anti

homework.

Independent practice,

important homework and a

bunch of repetitions.

Yeah.

Awesome.

So where can families find you?

And then you said you teach

specific levels.

And then when is your

registration opening or is

it open already for the 24-25?

Yeah, registration is open right now.

Yes,

it's open right now for the school year.
So our classes,
I kind of take math off of
parents' plates.
So whether they do one child
with us so that they can be
focusing on the other ones,
or if they're getting to a
level of math where they're going, oh,
I'm not sure about this.
Right, exactly.
We can kind of do that as a
service for them.
So if you enroll in one of our,
we do math and we also do
writing classes.
And if you enroll in one of our classes,
we take the whole year of
math and do it for you.
So like I said about homework,
we don't assign a lot.
I don't assign parents homework,
which I think is what that
turns into a lot of the times.
We take the full year,
we take them all the way
through whatever grade
level they would be working

on and make sure that those concepts are
you know, deeply ingrained in them.
All of our classes are super small.
So there's only a max of
eight kids in them.
So that way there's lots of
sharing time and they can
do that explaining of their thinking and,
but enough where we can
break into teams and have
really fun games.
So our registration's open
for that right now.
We're also doing summer
camps that are one day a
week right now that you can
sign up for just to keep
your child kind of fresh on
their skills over the summer.
Very skills-based.
Lots of games because I love games.
Um,
so we have both those things open right
now.
So, um,
people can connect with me on
Instagram or Facebook.
Um, just Moxie learning.
And are you, you're on out school.

Is that correct?

Um, I am not on out school anymore.

I started on out school.

Yeah, but I am.

Okay.

So where, where can, yeah.

So just those social media

outlets or do you have a website?

Yeah, the links are in my, um,

bios of all those social media things.

Okay.

I'll make sure to hyperlink

it into the notes.

And since this is prerecorded, um,

those will be in right away

when this goes live.

So, um,

so parents can find that and find

you and your, your classes.

So that's awesome.

Well, thank you so much, Amy.

This has been an incredible conversation.

I really appreciate you

talking about this topic

because I know as parents

go into the new year,

this is one of those high anxiety.

Yes.

Topics.

What do we do with math?

I could talk about it for ages.

So if anyone wants to reach out to me,

like I'm happy to have conversations,

even just running things by

me or anything like that.

Awesome.

Well, thank you so much.

And definitely reach out to Amy.

I'm glad that you are in

this space and helping

families in this way

because it's so needed.

So thank you for what you do

and for helping students as they

learn to see that math just

really isn't that scary.

And it's very rewarding to know.

Yes, exactly.

Yes.

We want more kids that say,

I love math and I know how to apply it.

So yes, that's our mission.

Yeah.

Awesome.

Well, thank you so much.

And, um,

definitely check out Amy's website

and connect with her.

If you do have questions.

Um,

I love that our guests want to connect

with our community because, um,

there's a lot of questions

and especially with us being live on this,

the show that, that you may have that,

um,

that Amy can answer for you.

And she's happy to do that.

So, so reach out.

Next week, we're going to be, actually,

Annie's going to be hosting

a discussion on growing great writers.

So strategies for homeschooling families.

And so we've covered reading.

math and writing all in three episodes.

So that is amazing.

Hopefully we're covering the

high sticky subjects for

you as we delve into the

next school year.

So definitely join Annie for that.

I will,

this is actually my last broadcast

now for over a month.

All the other co-hosts are filling in.

So

I'm going to be in Europe

speaking at the Global Home

Education Conference in July.

So I'm excited about that

and come back with maybe

some more connections for all of you.

So thanks for joining us

here on Empowering

Homeschool Conversations.

And we'll see you next time

for the next show.

Bye, everybody.

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