Teach Decimals on a Budget

Not sure what to do with the catalogs piled high in your living room? Try this entertaining and educational math activity that will teach your fourth grader how to add and subtract decimals.

What You Need:

- Mail order catalogs
- Paper
- Pencil

What You Do:

Step 1
Gather several mail order catalogs. Explain to your child that he is going to "shop" from the catalog of his choice. Tell him he can choose whatever items he wishes, as long as he stays within his budget. No need to put your money where your mouth is…give him a *pretend* budget, $50 or $100, depending on the cost of the items in the catalog.

Step 2:
Start shopping! Ask your child to write down the name of the item and the cost. After he shops for each item, have him estimate how much money he has left in his budget. Encourage him to "shop" until he has reached his limit.

Step 3:
Now, have your child add up the cost of his purchases, reminding him to line up his digits and decimals correctly. If he's under-budget, ask him how much he has left. Can he add another purchase to his fantasy list? If he's over-budget, ask him to subtract one item (or items) until he is within his budget.

Adding up the items in a wish list is an enjoyable way for your child to strengthen his understanding of decimals. True, this is only pretend shopping but, it's fun to dream!

© Copyright 2006-2012 Education.com All Rights Reserved.