Subtract Whole Numbers

Dear Family,

This week your child is learning to subtract whole numbers using the standard algorithm.

One way your child is learning to subtract is to use place value in a subtraction problem such as the one below.

$$6{,}001 - 3{,}528$$

In this problem, you need to regroup in order to subtract.
A place-value chart can show the regrouping.

Thousands	Hundreds	Tens	Ones
6	0	0	1

Thousands	Hundreds	Tens	Ones	
5	10	0	1	6 thousands = 5 thousands + 10 hundreds
5	9	10	1	10 hundreds = 9 hundreds + 10 tens
5	9	9	10 + 1 = 11	10 tens = 9 tens + 10 ones

Now you can subtract.

	Thousands	Hundreds	Tens	Ones
	5	9	9	11
−	3	5	2	8
	2	4	7	3

Instead of using a place-value chart, your child is also learning to use the standard algorithm for subtraction to show regrouping above a subtraction problem.

$$\begin{array}{r} \overset{\;\;\;\;\;9\;\;9}{\overset{5\;\;10\;10\;11}{6{,}001}} \\ -\,3{,}528 \\ \hline 2{,}473 \end{array}$$

Invite your child to share what they know about subtracting whole numbers by doing the following activity together.

Learning Games

- Hungry Fish
- Match
- Pizza

Math Tools

- Base-Ten Blocks
- Number Line

ACTIVITY SUBTRACTING WHOLE NUMBERS

Do this activity with your child to subtract whole numbers.

- Ask your child to come up with a four-digit number that is greater than 5,000. This will be the "special" number.

    Example: Your child picks 7,864.

- Have your child ask a family member for a four-digit number less than 5,000.

    Example: The family member picks 3,219.

- Have your child subtract the two numbers.

    Example:

$$
\begin{array}{r}
\overset{5\ 14}{7,8\cancel{6}\cancel{4}} \\
-\ 3,219 \\
\hline
4,645
\end{array}
$$

- Then have your child round each number to the nearest thousand to check that their difference is reasonable.

    Example: 7,864 rounds to 8,000, and 3,219 rounds to 3,000.
    $8,000 - 3,000 = 5,000$
    Since 5,000 is close to 4,645, your child's difference is reasonable.

- Finally, have your child use addition to check that their answer is correct.

    Example: $4,645 + 3,219 = 7,864$; your child's answer is correct!

- Repeat the activity. Use the "special" number and have a family member choose another four-digit number that is less than 5,000.

- Look for real-life opportunities to subtract numbers with your child.