

TEEN TOPICS

Teens Need Math To Land Dream Jobs

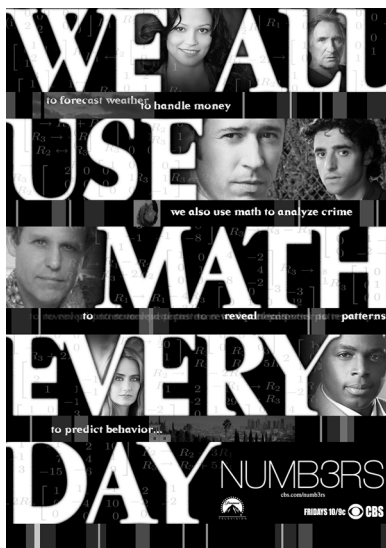
(NAPSA)—What do doctors, lawyers and architects have in common? For one, they are among teens' hottest career choices. They also require a significant understanding of math at work every day. Despite this, many teens are not motivated to take advanced math classes to help them prepare for success in these future careers.

A telephone survey of 1,000 12- to 17-year-olds commissioned by Texas Instruments revealed that four out of five teenagers believe math is important for achieving their goals of being doctors, scientists, executives and lawyers, but only half are planning to take advanced math classes beyond their schools' minimum requirements.

The survey showed 80 percent of teens want to pursue careers in medicine, sports, science, education, business, military, law or architecture—many of which require advanced college degrees with significant focus on mathematics and science.

"Parents need to understand how important it is that they encourage their children to take higher-level courses of math while in high school," says David Mammano, founder and publisher of Next Step Magazine, which provides career advice to more than 860,000 teens. "The disconnect between teens' career aspirations and their plans to take minimal math classes could lead to students not being prepared for college-level classes or landing the job they want in the future."

"No matter what career teens choose, a strong math education is



critical because it builds analytical and reasoning skills. Students need to take challenging math courses every year in high school," Mammano said.

He advises parents to work with their teenagers starting in middle school to plan out their course schedules. Parents can seek out resources to help teens understand the value of math and plan for their careers, such as MomsForMath.org, NextStepMagazine.com or Career Voyages.gov.

More tips from Mammano include:

Make Math Fun. Tie math into the things that already interest teens—their hobbies, TV or movies. A great place to start is Texas Instruments' "We All Use Math Every Day"™ program that teaches math lessons based on plots featured in the hit CBS TV show

"NUMB3RS." The free classroom activities are available at www.cbs.com/numb3rs.

Provide Encouragement. Challenge teens to take harder upper-level math courses even though they may not make straight A's. Parents can make a difference simply by applauding teens for the effort it takes to participate in those classes. Reinforcing everyday use of math at home, while shopping, budgeting, baking or gardening can also help increase students' interest in math.

Get Involved. Get teens involved in school or community programs such as science fairs or math team competitions that stimulate them intellectually and hone their analytical skills.

Identify Career Role Models. Find local professionals and inquire about mentorship opportunities that match teens' career interests. Teenagers can "shadow" an executive on the job to see what kind of knowledge is needed for that field.

Set The Example. They may not want you to know it, but teens look to their parents as role models. Let your teens see that you are interested in math and show them how you use it each day—at home and in your own career. Acknowledge that your teen's proficiency in math may exceed yours and that is a good thing. Also be aware that they are learning more math in different ways and this often involves the use of technology or teaching tools that might be unfamiliar to you. Talk with your teen's teachers to better understand these new advancements in math teaching. They'd likely welcome the interest.