**PARENTS, WHY DO I NAG THEM ABOUT THEIR MATH FACTS? Read on....**

This article is excerpted from the Scholastic Research Foundation Paper *Research Foundation & Evidence of Effectiveness for FASTT Math*. Educators and cognitive scientists agree that the ability to recall basic math facts fluently is necessary for students to attain higher-order math skills. Grover Whitehurst, the Director of the Institute for Educational Sciences (IES), noted this research during the launch of the federal Math Summit in 2003: “Cognitive psychologists have discovered that humans have fixed limits on the attention and memory that can be used to solve problems. One way around these limits is to have certain components of a task become so routine and over-learned that they become automatic.” Whitehurst, 2003).

The implication for mathematics is that some of the sub-processes, particularly basic facts, need to be developed to the point that they are done automatically. If this fluent retrieval does not develop then the development of higher-order mathematics skills — such as multiple-digit addition and subtraction, long division, and fractions — may be severely impaired. Indeed, studies have found that lack of math fact retrieval can impede participation in math class discussions, successful mathematics problem-solving, and even the development of everyday life skills. And rapid math-fact retrieval has been shown to be a strong predictor of performance on mathematics achievement tests.

If a student constantly has to compute the answers to basic facts, less of that student’s thinking capacity can be devoted to higher level concepts than a student who can effortlessly recall the answers to basic facts. For example, a child who is performing multiple-digit division must monitor constantly where he is in that procedure. If the child must use primitive counting strategies to subtract or multiply during the division process, the attention and memory resources devoted to these procedures reduce the student’s ability to monitor and attend to the larger division problem. The result is that the student often fails to grasp the concepts involved in multiple-digit division.

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**Parents, the best way to help them succeed in math is to encourage them to master these facts. Please have them visit my website daily and practice facts for 5-10 minutes per day!! Homework is not DONE until they do this DAILY!!!**