



Clip It

Use coupons and the change from your nightstand or purse to help your kids learn about the benefits of budgeting and the value of money.

Help your kids learn the value of money and the benefits of budgeting with this simple activity geared toward early elementary students.

Items Needed:

- Several coupons cut from the newspaper. The coupons should be money-off coupons (Save 50¢), not percentage-off coupons.
- A small pile of change (pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters).

How To Play:

- Clip several coupons from the newspaper, coupon book, or circular.
- Place a coupon in front of the child and ask him or her to show you how much you can save with that coupon. (For example, if you show them a coupon for 25¢ off a box of cereal, they need to show you a quarter, two dimes and a nickel, or five nickels.)
- Put these coins off to the side.
- After repeating this process for a number of coupons, ask the child to count the money and tell you what he or she could buy with the money saved. For example, if they've accumulated \$3.00, maybe the child would be able to buy an ice cream cone. If they've saved \$1.25, maybe the child could buy a Matchbox car.

Variations:

- Play the game once per week, accumulating the savings (or tracking them in a notebook) from week to week to show how much money can be saved over time by saving a little here and a little there.
- Have the kids convert the change into dollar bills.
- For older kids, include percentage-off coupons.
- Play this game when you go to the store with your child. When you get home, have the child put the money saved into a cup or jar. After several weeks, have the child count the money saved, and then use it to purchase something that the two of you will enjoy.



Coin Roll

Grab some loose change and a couple of dice to play COIN ROLL. Teach your young child how to count and learn the value of money.

This simple game for lower elementary students is a fun way to improve your children's math skills while learning how to count money and appreciate the value of money.

Items Needed:

- One die
- A small pile of change. For beginners, use only two types of coins – pennies and nickels, or pennies and dimes. For more advanced players, use pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters.

How To Play:

- The child rolls the die and gets the number of pennies shown.
- As the child accumulates more pennies, he or she must convert them to nickels, and as nickels accumulate, he or she must convert them to dimes or quarters.
- Have the child play the game until they reach a predetermined amount, perhaps 50¢.

Variation:

- The game can be made competitive by having two or more players. The first one to reach a predetermined amount is the winner.



Plan It

Get your child thinking about the value and limitations of money by playing PLAN IT. All it takes is a catalog or a flyer from the Sunday paper, plus a little imagination.

PLAN IT helps upper elementary or middle school kids learn both the limitations of money and the importance of smart buying decisions by having children put together “shopping lists” according to a set budget.

Items Needed:

- One or more advertising flyers or catalogs that include pricing.
- A sheet of paper and pen or pencil.
- Possibly a calculator.

How To Play:

- Ask the child to make up a list of items from the catalog(s) or flyer(s) to buy within a specific budget.
- Add up the items on the “shopping list” to see if they fit within the budget.
- Discuss whether the items on the list are the best way to spend the money.

Variations:

- Have the child do the same exercise without the aid of paper or a calculator.
- Add the wrinkle of saying that he or she needs to pick out enough items from a grocery store flyer so that the family can eat five dinners for the week.
- Pretend the child has just won a specific large sum of money (maybe \$1,000), and have them use the catalogs to create a list of dream items.
- Have two or more children play, and the one who comes the closest to the budget without going over wins.



Change It or Lose It

Help your kids flex their mental money muscles with the addictive brainteaser of CHANGE IT OR LOSE IT. All it takes is a pile of coins and a little competitive spirit.

Adults and kids alike will enjoy the brainteaser nature of CHANGE IT OR LOSE IT, when they have to “guess” how much money the other person has in their hand based on two pieces of information.

Items Needed:

- A small pile of coins.

How To Play:

- Reach into a pile or jar of money and pull out a handful of coins.
- Without the child seeing, count the number of coins you have in your hand and add up the value of the coins (You may want to write this information down).
- Tell the child how many coins you have and what the total value is. For example, say, “4 coins, worth 26¢.”
- Let the child try to figure out exactly which coins you are holding. For example, “two dimes, one nickel, and one penny.”
- If the total is correct, but the types of coins are incorrect, allow the child to guess again. For example, if you say, “6 coins, 30¢,” the child would be right by saying “six nickels,” even though what you are holding is one quarter and five pennies.

Variations:

- Have two children play against one another. If they guess right, they add the coins to their pile. After a set number of rounds, whichever child has the most money is declared the winner.
- Play a mini version of this game whenever you have some change in your pocket. Simply say, “I have 7 coins, totaling 82¢.” If the child gets the answer correct, let him or her keep the change.



Shop Around

Help your kids learn the advantages of comparative shopping with SHOP AROUND. All it takes is that pile of advertising flyers that comes in the Sunday paper.

By encouraging middle school and high school kids to compare prices, SHOP AROUND can help your child learn the real advantages and disadvantages of bargain shopping.

Items Needed:

- The advertising flyers from the Sunday paper.

How To Play:

- Talk with your child to select an item that he or she would like to purchase, such as a CD player or new pair of shoes.
- Pick a budget for the purchase that is a little low.
- Have the child look through the advertisements for the lowest prices on that item.
- Once the child finds the lowest price, ask the following questions.
- Does this store have the lowest prices on most items?
- Do they have the lowest prices on all items or just high profile items?
- How far away is the store with the lowest price?
- How much time and gas will we spend going to this store?
- Do you think the quality of this product is better or worse than the quality of higher priced products from other stores?
- Why are some brands priced higher than others for seemingly identical products?
- Discuss your child's answers to these questions.



Understanding the Means

Kids learn the benefits of budgeting with UNDERSTANDING THE MEANS, a role-playing game that helps children compare income and expenses.

UNDERSTANDING THE MEANS helps middle school and high school students learn the benefits of budgeting their allowance by comparing income with expenses.

Items Needed:

- A couple sheets of paper and a pen or pencil.

How To Play:

- Have your child make a two-column list of expenses and income.
- Under expenses, he or she should list what they expect to spend on movies, snacks, music downloads.
- Have the child add all of the expenses and subtract the total from their income (allowance, spending money, etc.).
- If spending is more than income, ask your child to think of ways to reduce spending.
- Once the budget is balanced, help your child develop a savings plan that includes both short-term and long-term savings goals.

Variation:

Ask your child to use percentages when creating their budget. For example, 40% of earnings must go to savings, and 15% for food, etc.

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