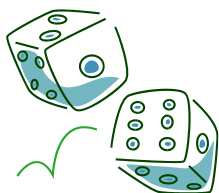


Simple advice on helping a junior child enjoy maths...

As your child moves from simple counting and adding to becoming a fluent mathematician, it is not always clear – especially to parents who are not confident mathematicians! – how to help. But in fact our help is crucial, and can be the difference between success and failure.



Learning number facts: One of the simplest and truly most effective ways of supporting your child in maths is to make sure that they know their basic number facts off by heart. These are the pairs of numbers which add together to make all of the numbers up to ten. Children need to know that 6 is 5 + 1, or 4 + 2, or 3 + 3; and that 10 is 5 + 5 or 4 + 6 or 3 + 7 or 2 + 8 or 1 + 9. Knowing these means that they also know that 24 + 6 is 30, that 510 + 90 is 600 and that £1.24 + 6p is £1.30 – all essential to being a confident calculator!

Playing games: It is surprising but true that playing games can really help children's maths. Adding dice scores, playing dominoes, track or card games all help children's numeracy. Also useful are short memory games played in the car or on the bus – first person to add 2 or 3 car numbers to make 100 is the winner!

Tables and more tables... Of course it is as important as it ever was that children learn their tables. However, some types of pressure here are counterproductive and, in these days when children do not routinely memorise as much as they used to, it is definitely best to focus. Follow these simple rules for best effect:

Make sure your child can not only recite their times tables (one six is six, two sixes are twelve, etc.) but that they can answer random questions, e.g. 'what are four sixes?'

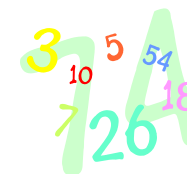
Test them by asking division as well as multiplication facts, e.g. 'what is 64 divided by 8?' as well as 'what are eight eights?'

If they don't know a fact, have they tried 'turning it round'? So they might not remember five sevens, but they will almost certainly know seven fives.

You can always 'turn round' a multiplication $5 \times 7 = 7 \times 5$.

Another easy technique is doubling up. If they can't remember four sixes, try four threes (12) and double it. This works for the 6x table and the 8x table (double 4).

Use some simple mnemonics. E.g. $56 = 7 \times 8$ or five, six, seven, eight to remember this fact!



Golden Rules...

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DO 'little and often'! Counting sultanas as you eat them or stairs when going up to a first floor flat is a much better way of rehearsing counting than sitting over a workbook.

DON'T push a skill, especially if a child is becoming confused or is feeling pressured. It always pays to talk to the teacher if you feel your child is not understanding something, rather than confuse them further by teaching them in a different way.

DO give LOTS of praise. Resist the temptation to say, 'but' or to point out mistakes every time. Children need encouragement and positive reinforcement to be confident, and a confident child makes a better learner.

DON'T force workbooks on your child. They will do plenty of writing in their maths books at school. At home, you have the opportunity to help them memorise their number facts and perform mathematical calculations in their heads.

DO play games! Dice, dominoes, track games and cards all make excellent excuses for using and applying our number skills. And at the same time your child is learning the important skills of losing with grace and winning with style!

DON'T stress written sums laid out as you used to do them! Nowadays it is the development of what we call 'numerical fluency' that counts. Children need to be comfortable with numbers, to understand how they work and to be confident in doing mental calculations.

DO remember that your focussed attention is a far more important and pleasurable commodity for any child than any amount of TV or video game activity. Every child wants to be doing things one-on-one with someone they love and trust.



Helping Your Junior Child with... MATHS