



Be the Best that You can Be

Cedarwood School

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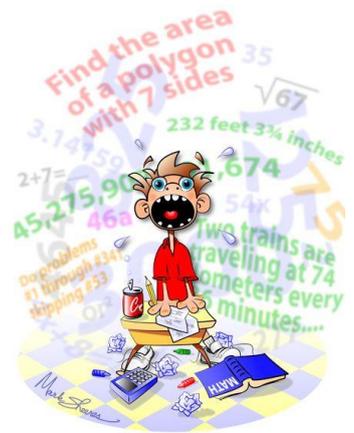
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Developing Math Skills

Maths is often one of those school subjects that provokes anxiety in children and parents alike. Feeling overwhelmed about Maths can create obstacles to learning new skills. Luckily, recent research in Mathematics is both surprising and encouraging. Below are a few basics that we can keep in mind when developing Math skills.



7 lessons about Maths

- 1) Everyone can learn maths
(no more telling yourself "Maths is not my thing"!)
- 2) Mistakes are valuable
(see them as opportunities to learn and grow)
- 3) Questions are really important
- 4) Maths is about creativity and making sense
- 5) Depth is more important than speed
- 6) Maths class is about learning not performing
- 7) Maths is about connections and communicating

(Jo Boaler – Stanford University)

Maths skill development begins from a young age:

Crawling ensures that children use both sides of their brain in a co-ordinated way. As they progress through preschool and develop their skills - visual and auditory perception; vocabulary; left to right orientation; visual motor co-ordination, gross and fine motor skills; comprehension – they are laying the foundations for learning maths throughout their lives.

Maths is all about patterns, sequences and relationships. Pre-number development is based on both auditory (rhythm, rhyme and beats) and visual sequencing (sorting into sets).



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When our children are having difficulty in maths we take them back to the early stages so that we can make the foundations solid and sturdy, preparing them carefully for the next step.

Maths support at school involves lots of work with concrete objects until our children are ready to move on to more representational or abstract levels.

Repetition, repetition, repetition! We use multi-sensory approaches (touching, feeling, building, doing) to continually revisit and overlearn concepts. Maths must be fun and we can go right back to earlier stages; for example, bouncing balls to get an auditory rhythm or skipping out a pattern on the paving.

There are various **levels of Maths knowledge** that learners progress through:

- Intuitive level – trying to connect the new with something the learner already knows
- Concrete level – the child can give you answers as long as he has access to concrete materials
- Pictorial or representational level of knowing – a way has been found to represent quantity in a picture or diagram
- Abstract/symbolic level of knowing – can apply this information to something else
- Communications level of knowledge – being able to explain this to someone else. It is at this level that a Math concept is fully mastered.





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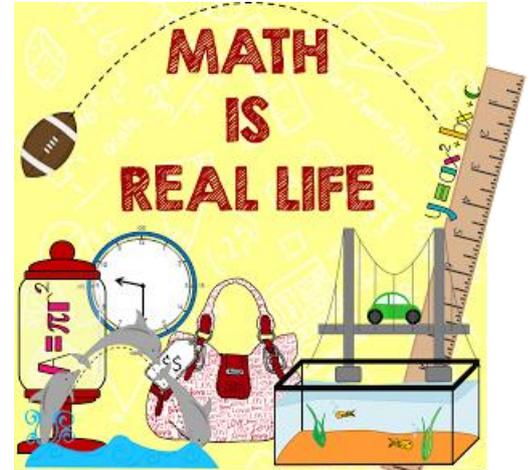
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How can you help at home if your child is having difficulty at school?

Below are some ideas in which we can practice the application of math skills within daily lives, in order to make learning practical, fun and meaningful. Choose a few circumstances (which are age appropriate and within your child's areas of interest) in which to use patterns, counting, dividing or problem solving using basic math skills:



- Household routines:
 - ✓ Structure time to lay the table (consolidating left and right, counting out the knives and forks)
 - ✓ Ask them to help to hang and sort washing, using colour, size and quantity.
 - ✓ Shopping: budget and plan what is needed and if they manage to stay within budget, set a reward.
 - ✓ Cooking involves quantity, measurement, time, sequencing and planning, a daily activity which is meaningful, rewarding and develops a life skill.
- Baking is a great opportunity to measure and count (and have fun!)
- Recognise and speak about patterns and sequences in the environment
- Play with numbers in your world (number plates are great for number games in the traffic)
- Sports opportunities: counting score or predicting outcomes
- Board games, Dice and Card games offer fun, interactive opportunities to engage with number skills
- Download apps or games which can support Maths skills using technology
- Maths is everywhere. Make maths relevant to their world by speaking about how we use maths in our everyday lives.
- Offer opportunities to discuss Math anxiety and practise some self-calming techniques
- Provide positive feedback and acknowledge their effort in problem solving, praise them in the process of attempt and discovery. Celebrate improvement -don't look for perfection.

