

## 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  $\pounds 1.24 + 6\text{p}$  is  $\pounds 1.30$  - 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 counter-productive 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!