

5 TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS

Supporting a child
struggling with maths

1

Provide gentle support and encouragement.

Acknowledge/re-affirm their feelings around maths by repeating back what they say BUT add in extra words to encourage a belief that it will not always be this way (growth mindset.)

“ You feel that the maths you are doing is really hard **at the moment**, and it makes you sad/worried... ”

“ You feel you do not understand it **yet**. ”

- Show an interest in what they have been learning.



- Encourage them to explain the maths that they are doing using words and drawing pictures/diagrams.
- Instead of pointing out they are wrong, ask them to explain how they got their answer – this may help them to discover their own mistake – or it may help you offer more targeted support as you then may be able to see what went wrong (i.e. they added instead of multiplied.)

2

Help them understand maths is not about speed.



Maths is not about speed. Avoid expecting them to complete maths quickly and playing timed games or activities as this can create/increase maths anxiety.

3

Mistakes can be good.



Help them understand that our brains are designed to learn from our mistakes – mistakes are good! If we are not making mistakes, then we are not learning anything new – celebrate mistakes as opportunity for learning – encourage children to work out why an answer was wrong “what was your deliberate mistake?”

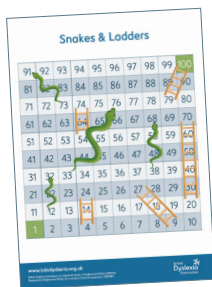
If they can verbalise what this mistake was, then they may be more aware next time and less likely to repeat it.

4

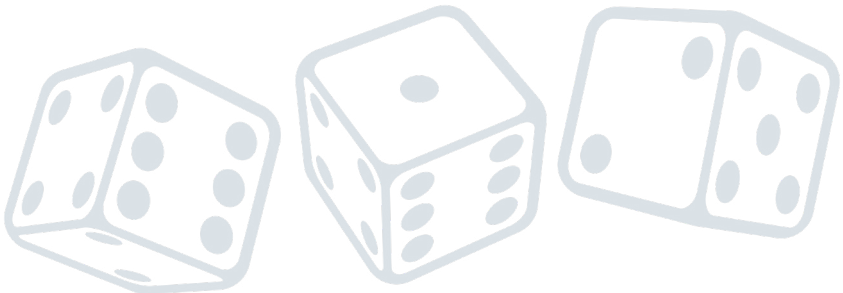
Play games and puzzles with your child.

- Playing board games can help to cement skills that are needed in maths, such as:
 - Counting on from the next number (or step) and not from the one you are on to practise adding-on.
 - Collecting or giving back money or tokens and keeping a running count.
 - Developing logical thinking and strategy skills.
- Card games can be adapted to meet the needs of your child:
 - Play pontoon to 11 (with just the 1-5 cards) instead of 21.
 - In Go-Fish players collect pairs of cards that total a number rather than just the number.
 - Change the rules of snap, i.e. the match is made for odd or even numbers, double or half numbers, pairs of numbers that are “x” more or less.

- Dice games – create a game to practice and keep basic skills updated (all children benefit from practising mental maths skills regularly, and even more so if they are likely to forget facts.)
 - Using 2 or more dice, practice adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, doubles, learning number bonds or a times table.
 - Give your game a fun name (avoid making success about speed), have a set number of times to play each round or each time the winner collects a 1p coin or token - winner is first to get to 10p etc
- Most importantly, have fun playing!



We have included a downloadable Snakes and Ladders game that you can print off and use together at the back of this booklet.



5

Be positive and avoid sharing your maths anxiety.

Even if you dislike maths, try to avoid sharing your dislike. Being positive about maths can impact their future success in maths attainment and in their belief in their ability to learn maths. This is particularly true for girls.

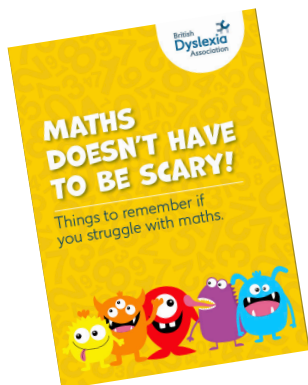
Be positive!

Show and include them wherever possible when maths is needed around the home:

- shopping
- planning for days out
- DIY and garden projects
- measuring
- booking tickets
- budgeting



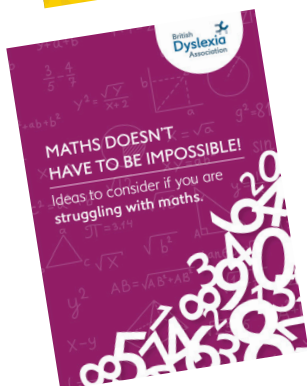
Further resources



Maths doesn't have to be scary!

Online booklet to support young children with their maths skills.

Download



Maths doesn't have to be impossible!

Online booklet to support young people with their maths skills.

Download

If someone is experiencing significant difficulties in their study or in day-to-day life and would like to find out more about maths difficulties, or needs further information about a Diagnostic Assessment for Dyscalculia, visit our website: bdadyslexia.org.uk

Support us

We hope you've found this guide useful. To help our charity continue providing free resources and support for dyslexia and dyscalculia, please consider making a donation. Thank you so much.

Donate



Download

You will need:

- Counters (you could use pennies, old bottle lids)
- Dice

How to play:

Players take turns to move their counter forward the number of spaces shown on the dice. If your counter lands at the bottom of a ladder, you can move up to the top of the ladder. If your counter lands on the head of a snake, you must slide down to the bottom of the snake. The first player to get to the '100' space is the winner.

This Snakes and Ladders Game is designed to match the 100 Square.

Encourage children to jump along the squares and not always count in ones. For example, if they are on 14 and throw a 5, jump straight to 19. We know that 4 and 5 is 9 because 4 fingers and 5 fingers total 9 fingers, so 14 add 5 is 19.

If throwing one dice is easy, throw two dice and move the score on the dice. Notice and discuss what happens if you throw a 10.



bdadyslexia.org.uk

Helpline: 0333 405 4567

National service for people with dyslexia and dyscalculia and those who support them. It offers free and confidential information, support and signposting.

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