

Understanding maths anxiety: a guide for parents and carers

You don't need to be a maths whiz to make a difference. There are simple things you can do to help your child build the skills and confidence they need so they can thrive in maths.

1. Talk positively about maths at home

The way parents and carers talk about maths (sometimes referred to as numeracy) has a **powerful impact** on how children feel about the subject.

When maths is spoken about negatively at home, children are more likely to experience maths anxiety – a sense of fear or worry when faced with mathematical tasks. This anxiety can lead to lower achievement and/or avoidance of maths altogether.

On the other hand, positive maths talk – like emphasising effort, persistence, and everyday usefulness – can foster a **growth mindset**. This is the belief that abilities improve with practice and hard work.

2. Build confidence in maths

A home environment that values effort over right answers can build confidence. **Showing curiosity and talking through problem-solving** helps children see maths as a skill that can be developed. There is also growing research that suggests some children, particularly girls, may experience higher levels of maths anxiety, making confidence-building support especially important.

3. Work with your child's school

When schools and families partner together, children are more likely to feel **confident and positive** about maths.

Parents can support maths learning at home by using simple, step-by-step approaches that connect to what their child already knows. By building on familiar everyday tasks, giving them time to practice, and **offering encouragement**, you help them gain the confidence to **tackle more challenging problems**.

This guide was produced by the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership, in partnership with Parents Victoria.

15

fun activities to boost maths skills



Daily routines

Master chef

1

Cook or bake together using measurements and fractions



Supermarket sweep

2

Estimate total costs at the shops and compare to the receipt



Family budget

3

Plan a family budget for a meal or day out



Weather watch

4

Graph the weather over a week



Savings jar

5

Sort and count coins together



Play and puzzles

Card games

6

Play strategy or number games like Memory, Uno, Monopoly, or Yahtzee



Interior designer

7

Measure furniture or spaces for DIY tasks or rearranging rooms



Logic puzzles

8

Have a weekly puzzle night with Sudoku, logic puzzles, or riddles



Bargain hunt

9

Compare discounts and percentages in catalogues or online



Dream team

10

Track sports statistics or scores and graph them



Outdoor & creative fun

Travel log

11

Track the travel time to and from familiar destinations like school, the shops or to a friend's place



Patterns in nature

12

Explore patterns in nature – count petals, spot symmetry



Lego

13

Build with LEGO using equal lengths and shapes



Geometry

14

Draw or cut out shapes and identify sides, angles or symmetry



Word problems

15

Turn daily situations into maths questions to solve

