

Supporting children to develop positive attitudes towards maths



Helping children with their homework can feel daunting. Being confident with numbers makes it less so, but however you feel about maths and whatever your skill level, you can still engage positively in their learning by following National Numeracy's top tips:

Be positive about maths.

Don't say things like "I can't do maths" or "I hated maths at school"; your child might start to think like that themselves.

Praise your child for effort

rather than talent – this shows them that by working hard they can always improve.

Point out the maths in everyday life. Include your child in activities involving maths such as using money, cooking and travelling.

If you struggle with maths yourself – try our free online tool [the National Numeracy Challenge](#) to improve your maths level.

Talking positively about maths

Talking positively about maths can help your children develop a good relationship with numbers. This can include effective praise, encouraging growth mindset and normalising struggle. Positive attitudes are core to success in maths, so supporting this can have a big impact on your children's performance.

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There are lots of things that we often say in a well-meaning way but can be unhelpful. When talking about maths try to:

- Make sure you are highlighting the importance of maths, rather than implying that it's just for school or doesn't matter in real life
- Praise the effort that went into a process rather than perceived "intelligence" or "talent" – this helps show children that it is hard work which pays off. Think about how they might feel when they get things wrong if they are used to being told that they're clever when they're right
- Encourage a growth mindset – that it's OK to find things difficult but by being persistent and practising anyone can improve
- Normalise struggle – remind them that it's OK to make mistakes as that's part of learning and not a sign that they're bad at maths

Think about some of the things you might say without thinking about it. We've listed some examples below. Look at our examples and make a note of why they might not be helpful, and ideas of what you could say instead.

I was never any good at maths at school and it did me no harm.

It's OK, you're more of a creative person than a maths person.

Well done for getting that right – you're so clever.

This is easy – you should be able to get this right.

For example: *"I found maths hard too but by working at it you can get there"*

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Pointing out the maths in the real world: numbers people diary

In order to remain engaged with maths learning throughout school, children of all ages need to see that it is relevant to them. Maths is often seen as something that 'has to be done' at school, but if children see maths in the real world they are more likely to see its benefits.

A fun way to point out maths is keeping a number diary with your child that notes where numbers are used through the day. Use a template, draw pictures, keep a scrapbook or try any other fun ways you can think of. If both the adults and the children keep a diary it can be fun to compare what you found.



Things I did today:	Where I saw numbers or maths:
<i>Example:</i> Got the bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our bus was the Number 7 – I checked the number to make sure that it was the right one• I looked at my watch and the timetable to see how long to wait• I gave the driver some coins

Continue on the next page.

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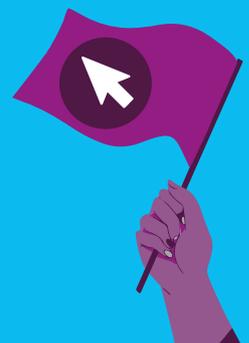
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Things I did today:	Where I saw numbers or maths:

Boosting your number confidence and skills: try the National Numeracy Challenge

One way you can practise is by [clicking here to try the National Numeracy Challenge](#). The resource is designed specifically for adults with low confidence. By registering and taking a quick check, we can provide you resources to help you improve which are at the right level for you based on your weaknesses. The check is not a test, there are no time limits and you can take your learning journey at your own pace, with no pressure.

It's really helpful for us to get feedback on our work so that we can make sure we are helping people in the best way. You can tell us how Number Confidence Week helped you by [clicking here to complete this short survey](#).



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