

# Supporting your child with their Maths Work

getting it right  
for every child  
in Inverclyde



Education, Communities & Organisational  
Development  
Inverclyde Educational Psychology Service

Inverclyde  
council

[www.inverclyde.gov.uk](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk)



## Helping your child with Maths Work?

This leaflet aims to support you in helping your child with Maths homework.

The support is based on a method called Paired Maths which relies on a discussion between you and your child about a mathematical question.

The interactions are structured in order for you to help your child gain a clearer understanding of the solution and the path to the solution.

You will employ strategies such as questioning, clarifying, thinking out loud, praising, summarising and generalising.



When working together and solving maths questions there are three main steps:

1. Understanding the question
2. Finding an answer to the question
3. Finishing the question by asking what have you done and how it links to things you have done in the past

## Understanding the question

- **Read aloud** the question if your child finds it hard to read it.
- Make sure that your child **understands** what the question is asking.
- Give your child **time to think** about the question and then ask them to explain how they might solve it.

### *How?*

- If appropriate, encourage use of concrete materials such as counters, cubes or any other objects as well as fingers.
- Try drawing dots, pictures or lists.
- Use a number line, multiplication square and a place value chart.
- Ask questions about the question e.g.
  - What kind of question is this?
  - What are you trying to find out?
  - Can you ask the question in a different way or using different words?
- Try to use everyday language.

## Finding an answer to the question

- Ask helpful **questions** that give clues to stimulate and guide your child's thinking.
  - What did you do in class to get started?
  - What have you already tried?
  - What important information do you already have?
  - How can you break the problem down into smaller steps?
  - How can you solve a simpler version of the problem?
  - How can this question be related to people, places, events and experiences in the life of your child?

### ***Avoid***

- Questions which require only a 'yes' or 'no' answer.
  - The question 'Did you understand that?'
  - Answering your own questions.
  - Saying 'That's wrong' – instead ask another question to give a clue e.g. 'Why?' or 'How?'
- Remember to **praise and encourage** your child very often, even for a very small success with a single step in solving a question. Keep their confidence high.
  - **Model by thinking out loud.** Encourage your child to tell you what they are thinking all the time. Then you will find out how they are solving the problem. Remember you also need time to think! If you are not sure, say so. You are not supposed to know everything.

## Finishing the question

- Check if the answer is correct.
- Encourage your child to summarise with you what they have done and how it is linked to things they did before.
- Remember – there is probably a number of ways to solve a question.
- Talk about how the learning might be used to do another similar question.
- If the answer is wrong, read the question over and try again.
- If there is no success after a few attempts, leave that part of the question and move on.
- Ask to meet with your child's teacher to talk through any queries about the question and the best way to help.


## Ways to help your child do well in maths

- Make sure your child understands the relevant maths concepts. Have your child manipulate objects to figure out basic concepts.
- Help them master basic facts, use flash cards to help your children learn the basic facts. When they don't know the answer, have them lay out objects to solve the problem.
- Teach them to write their numbers clearly.
- Provide help immediately when your child needs it.
- Show your child how to organise their maths homework. Teach them to begin by looking again at examples in textbooks/worksheets. Have them redo the examples before beginning the task to make sure they understand the question.
- Explain how to solve word problems. Teach your child to read a word problem several times and highlight the important information.
- Help them to learn the vocabulary of Maths. Check that they can define new terms. Use simple problems to show that they understand how the term is used.
- Teach them how to do Maths "in their head". Help them determine when it would be appropriate to use mental maths.
- Make maths part of your child's daily life e.g. spacing plants at a certain distance apart, doubling a recipe, paying bills in shops.

**For more help or advice or a copy of this leaflet on audio tape,  
in large print or in other languages, please contact:**

**Inverclyde Educational Psychology Service  
Compiled by Andrea Montgomery, Karen McPherson and Ety Frew**

 **01475 715430**

 **psychological.service@inverclyde.gov.uk**  
**www.inverclyde.gov.uk\EducationandLearning\  
InverclydeEducationalPsychologyService**