

Supporting Your Child in Mathematics at Home

A practical guide for parents of Years 5-6 students | ACARA v9.0 aligned

Mathematics confidence is one of the strongest predictors of academic success across all subjects. Research consistently shows that what happens at home matters as much as what happens at school. This guide gives you practical, evidence-based strategies to support your child's maths development - no teaching degree required.

The Key Insight

You don't need to be good at maths to help your child succeed. What matters most is your attitude toward maths, the conversations you have about it, and the opportunities you create for mathematical thinking in everyday life.

What Your Child Is Learning in Years 5-6

Under the Australian Curriculum (ACARA v9.0), Year 5-6 students work across six mathematical strands. Understanding these helps you connect home activities to school learning.

Strand	What It Covers	Home Connection
Number	Place value, fractions, decimals, percentages, operations with large numbers	Shopping, cooking measurements, pocket money
Algebra	Patterns, unknown values, simple equations, order of operations	Number puzzles, "guess my rule" games
Measurement	Length, area, volume, mass, time, money	Cooking, building, travel planning
Space	2D/3D shapes, angles, symmetry, transformations, location	Maps, building with blocks, art projects
Statistics	Data collection, graphs, averages, probability, chance	Sport stats, weather tracking, board games
Number & Place Value	Reading, writing and ordering numbers to millions	Population data, distances, large number contexts

10 Practical Strategies You Can Use Today

1. Make maths visible in daily life

Point out maths everywhere: "This recipe needs $\frac{3}{4}$ cup but we're doubling it - how much do we need?" "The drive is 180km and we're going 90km/h - how long will it take?" Don't force it - just notice it aloud.

2. Let them struggle (productively)

When your child is stuck, resist the urge to show them the answer immediately. Instead ask: "What do you know so far? What have you tried? Can you draw it?" Productive struggle builds resilience and deeper understanding.

3. Focus on process, not answers

Instead of "Is that right?", ask "How did you figure that out?" Celebrate strategies and thinking, not just correct answers. A child who can explain their reasoning understands more deeply than one who memorised a method.

4. Use games and puzzles

Card games (like "24"), dice games, Sudoku, chess, and strategic board games all develop mathematical thinking. They don't feel like "maths work" but they build number sense, pattern recognition, and logical reasoning.

5. Talk about your own maths

"I need to work out the tip - that's 15% of \$86. Let me think... 10% is \$8.60, half of that is \$4.30, so 15% is about \$12.90." Modelling your own mathematical thinking out loud is incredibly powerful.

6. Read the clock, count the change

Use analogue clocks. Pay with cash and have your child calculate change. These seem old-fashioned but they build fundamental number sense that digital tools don't.

7. Connect maths to their interests

Into sport? Calculate batting averages, compare player statistics, work out probability of winning. Into cooking? Scale recipes up and down. Into gaming? Discuss probability, resource management, strategy.

8. Don't say "I was never good at maths"

Research shows that parental maths anxiety directly transfers to children. Even if maths wasn't your strength, frame it positively: "Maths can be challenging, but it's worth working at."

9. Create a homework routine, not a homework battle

Same time, same place, minimal distractions. Be available for questions but don't hover. If homework consistently causes tears, that's a signal to talk to the teacher - the work may not be at the right level.

10. Celebrate growth, not grades

"You got 7 right this week - last week it was 5. That's real progress!" Growth mindset messaging is backed by strong research and genuinely changes how children approach challenges.

Warning Signs to Watch For

These may indicate your child needs additional support. None of them mean your child "can't do maths" - they usually point to a specific gap that, once identified and addressed, unlocks significant progress.

- Consistently avoids or becomes distressed by maths homework
- Cannot explain their method - they get answers but don't know why
- Struggles with basic operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication) that should be automatic by Year 5
- Difficulty reading or interpreting word problems (may indicate a literacy gap affecting maths)
- Counts on fingers for calculations that peers do mentally
- Confuses fractions, decimals, and percentages - these are critical Year 5-6 concepts
- Says "I'm bad at maths" or "I hate maths" regularly

When to Seek Help

If you notice several of these signs, a diagnostic assessment can pinpoint exactly where the gaps are. Targeted tutoring that addresses specific weaknesses - rather than generic homework help - produces the fastest and most lasting improvement. Onedai's free assessment identifies these gaps in 15 minutes.

Recommended Resources

- **Mathletics** (mathletics.com) - curriculum-aligned practice, popular in Australian schools
- **Khan Academy** (khanacademy.org) - free video lessons and practice, excellent for filling gaps
- **Prodigy** (prodigygame.com) - maths game format, good for engagement
- **NAPLAN Numeracy practice** - past papers available free from ACARA website
- **Physical resources:** dice, playing cards, measuring tapes, kitchen scales, analogue clocks

Free Diagnostic Assessment

See exactly where your child stands with our free 30-question, curriculum-aligned assessment. Instant parent report. No payment required.

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