

How we feel about maths



Family Maths
Toolkit

Information for parents & carers

However you feel about maths, you're not alone.

Some parents and carers try to avoid maths in their daily lives. For some, the thought of helping children with maths homework fills them with dread. Adults often experience worry, stress or fear around numbers.

If you feel this way about maths, it is not unusual. You can still support your children with their maths learning – but you may find it more comfortable to do so if you overcome your fears. And these feelings can be overcome.

Why is it common to feel anxiety around maths?

There are lots of reasons why someone could feel anxious about maths:

- Bad experiences at school
- Feeling under pressure
- Fear of failure
- Being told they're not a maths person
- Lack of support

These reasons are often beyond our own control. They do not truly reflect our abilities.

If you feel anxious about maths, it doesn't mean that you are unable to learn.

Tips for feeling differently about maths

- **Talk about your feelings about maths.** Finding a supportive person to talk to about your feelings and worries can often help overcome anxiety. You might learn that lots of people feel the same. But be sure to have these conversations away from children – always try to be positive about maths around them.
- **Challenge your own beliefs.** Think about why you don't feel good about maths. Are those reasons fair? For example, does finding maths hard at school mean that you'll always be bad at it?
- **Try not to compare yourself to others.** Maybe you find maths harder than some others do, or feel that other people have better maths skills than you. Learning is not about being better than others, but about improving on your own skills and confidence.
- **Reduce pressure.** You don't have to rush and you don't have to show anyone else what you're doing. Other people knowing if we are getting things wrong can sometimes make us panic. It's ok to learn at your own pace – maths is not a race! You can learn without pressure by using resources like the National Numeracy Challenge: www.nnchallenge.org.uk/fmt
- **Set realistic goals.** Don't expect yourself to become a maths professor overnight. A little bit of learning on a regular basis can help you improve at a steady pace.