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Mathematics

- Teacher contact: a parent should follow exactly the same methods that are used in the classroom, so as not to confuse the child or create unnecessary resistance
- Concrete beginnings: Allow use of ristopherrs, toes, buttons, cookies etc. Once a child is able to work without concrete aids, he should be encouraged to do calculations in his mind. Money helps a child to add & subtract. Useful for children to receive pocket money. Games like Monopoly, Cards etc. Allow children to cook with parents (adding, subtracting, measuring)
- **Multiplication**
Skip counting forwards (write numbers on separate cards, mix them up, have child rearrange them correctly. Play a hopping or clapping game, with the child calling out the next number with each hop or clap. Parents can participate. If a child has difficulty with a particular part of the sequence, only that part is practiced again

Skip counting backwards (same procedure as above)

Making flashcards

- **Division**
Has to be linked to multiplication ($2 \times 9 = 18$, $18/2 = 9$)

Flash cards

Long division: once taught in school should be reinforced by parent (ensure child keeps the columns straight, use colours & pointers to remind him of where to bring down a number, where to subtract, etc)
One mnemonic device that helps children remember steps (children with sequential problems):

Divide	Does
Multiply	McDonalds
Subtract	Sell
Check	Cheeseburgers
Bring Down	Downtown

- **Word problems**
Difficulty due to: An insufficient grasp of basic computational skills
Poor reasoning ability (make problems concrete, drawing pictures to visualize)
Poor reading ability (read problem to child)
Anxiety (the child believes he is incompetent) (parent can calmly help child to take the problem one step at the time)
How to help: Start by reading the problem silently to get a general understanding of it
Identify all numbers written as digits or words. Also look for hidden numbers such as a dozen, twice as many

Read the problem again, this time out loud & draw a picture or diagram

Read the problem yet again to find out what it is asking for. The answer may involve working backward from the question

Inquire: What do I have to do to answer the problem? Remember to add or multiply if a bigger number is expected, or to subtract or divide if a smaller number is expected. Look for key words that tell you which operation is correct (i.e. Total or In all indicate the need for adding or multiplying, How much is left, How many more, How much older than, indicate the need for subtraction, How much each, How many each, indicate the need for division)

Give the problem smaller numbers than the ones actually used in it

Ham it up, acting out the problem if necessary

Take a pencil and solve the problem. Check all computations. Does the answer make sense?

When helping a child with maths, it is important to be realistic & not expect 100% accuracy. Let the child set his own standard & decide how many mistakes should be allowed.

Studying for tests

- If questions are provided by the teacher carefully read through the material as a whole
- Record the questions on individual flash cards with the answers on the back (the parent can assist with the writing, depending on time and the child's writing skills)
- The child goes over the flash cards until he knows the answers automatically
- If the parent knows which format the test will take he/she can construct a sample test for the child (this may be beneficial if the child suffers from test anxiety)

Test anxiety

- Occasionally have a child work with a timer or stopwatch and without any help, so that he gets used to working under test-like conditions
- Write sample tests for the child to answer
- Teach the child to take brief relaxation breaks when he starts getting too anxious (close your eyes, breathe deeply, tense up your whole body and then relax it. Imagine you are feeling very good)
- A parent could make a special effort to take a child out for a special breakfast or some other treat on the day of an important test. This could help the child to have a positive association with testing.

You might also be interested in: [How a parent can help with homework](#)