

## Practical Tips For Helping Children Who Are Having Difficulties With Maths at School

The typical reaction to children who are having problems with maths at school is to try to encourage them by ‘helping’ them with their homework, buying extra maths books and arranging private tuition. Well-intentioned though these efforts might be, they can often be counter-productive.

If a child is not ready for a new mathematical idea, then no amount of extra help is going to make them understand it. It would be far better to leave the subject alone altogether but, as this is not possible for children who go to school, here are some things that you can do to ameliorate the situation.

### Give Your Child Praise

Parents have a much greater influence on their children’s experience of school than they give themselves credit for. If you let your child know that you are not in the least bit concerned about their inability to do maths at school, then you will be going a long way to relieving any stress or anxiety that they might feel. You can reassure them by telling them that it is quite common for people who eventually become very good at maths not to understand it when they are young.

This will help to counter the idea they may pick up at school that, because they can’t do maths when they are seven or eight, they have basically blighted their chances of success in life.

### Do Their Homework for Them

Homework is at best a waste of time for young children and, when it involves something that they do not enjoy, it can be positively harmful. One solution is to do the work for them. This is not a perfect solution but you can combine it with explaining to the teacher that you do not agree with the principle of homework. You will not necessarily receive a frosty reception. Many teachers do not like homework and only set it because it is expected of them by parents and administrators.

### Approach the Subject from Another Angle

‘Helping’ children with their sums just prolongs the agony associated with maths, but approaching the subject from a completely different angle can be a source of enjoyment for all concerned.

Practical work such as measuring or working with money is enjoyed by most children. Many games involve adding up or working things out or using logic. If you pursue these sorts of activities at weekends or during the holidays when your child is not tired, then maths can become fun again.

