

Is Fun!

Hi Parents

It's Mr Jacobs here! Some of you may know that I enjoy teaching maths at Brookhurst, and that I am the maths coordinator. As such it is my job to make sure I can get as many students (and parents) eating, sleeping and drinking maths as much as possible! To this end I just wanted to let you know about some of the ways you can support your children at home in improving their maths ability.

One of the most important areas that you can start with is mental calculation speed. The quicker children can calculate mentally the easier they find it to complete more complex operations. In school at the moment we are having a big push on number bonds (KS1) and table's knowledge (KS1 and KS2). Each week every class is running either the 6 minute or 3 minute club to help children improve their knowledge. This is a timed activity where the children have to successfully answer a range of questions targeted at a particular table or number bond set. Once they correctly answer all the questions then they go on to the next set. If they get some wrong then they have to repeat the set the following week. This quick recall of knowledge is really important for the children to have. If you would like to have a set of questions that you can print off and have at home then they are available to download from the Brookhurst website.

You can also improve your children's knowledge by giving them quick questions to calculate or answer. Possible times for this could be on the walk or drive home from school to pass the time or on longer car journeys at weekends. You could ask them to add together items at the supermarket to keep them interested in the shopping, then maybe if they get them right they are allowed to choose a prize at the end of the shop (bribery is always a good tool to encourage an interest!). Parents with older children who are quite quick at calculating can use the front section of the trolley as the children's bit. As you go round the shop you add items of shopping into the front section. The children then need to find the cost and keep a running total. When you get to the till then put those items through first and ask the cashier for a sub-total if this matches the total your child has- could there be a prize for them???



There are lots more of things that you could do and in fact the amount is only limited by your imagination!

New Technology:



Never one to ignore new technology, there are lots of different apps that can be downloaded onto smart phones/tablets/laptops/ipads or ipods that support children's mental calculations. You don't have to pay for them as lots are free. If you are not sure if the questions are appropriate then sitting with your child playing them can be a good way to find out, if they are too easy or too hard then just try another app or a higher level. Your children will enjoy playing and you can usually see a summary of how they have done at the end of their session as well.

The BBC website also has a good range of interactive quizzes, games and children can have a go at and these are helpfully arranged in year groups to level.



worksheets that your match your child's

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Homework:

From Year 2 upwards children also receive homework in maths that is set by the teacher and needs to be completed each week. You can support your children by letting them have a go at it and checking how they have done. If they have made a few errors then please feel free to help them rectify them. If your child is not understanding the homework at all then please direct them back to the teacher so that he or she can be made aware of this.

Sometimes when you are trying to help your children with their maths they might say “that’s not the way we do it at school” as methods for calculation have changed over the years. To help you with this the school also has a calculation policy which is available to download from the website. BE WARNED ... It is a lengthy document! It covers all methods of calculation from Reception up to Year 6 and is for all four operations. It has been written with parents in mind and as such takes you step by step through the calculations. I think it is a very useful document though and can provide you with lots of valuable reference steps.

Anyway, I had better stop before this turns into an essay!

Thanks in advance for supporting your child in maths this coming year and if there is anything you need then please come in and speak to me or drop me an email through the school office.

Mr Jacobs

P.S. **Maths is Fun!** (Just in case you hadn’t realised!)