MATHS ANXIETY & MATHEMATICAL EMPOWERMENT

A Guide For Parents & Guardians

Helping with maths homework — even if you don't know the maths

You don't need to know the method. Your calm, curious presence matters more than the right answer. Your job is to keep your child thinking — not to teach the topic or check the arithmetic.

WHY THIS HELPS

Research shows a parent's own maths anxiety can transfer to their child — but so can calm confidence. Children copy how the adults around them respond to a hard problem, not whether the adult knows the answer.

WHAT TO DO — AND WHAT TO AVOID

TRY THIS ✓

- Stay calm, even if you're unsure too
- Ask questions instead of giving answers
- Let them struggle a little — that's learning
- Praise effort and strategy, not just “right”
- Say “let's figure it out together”

AVOID THIS ×

- “I was never good at maths either”
- Jumping in with the answer
- Showing negative frustration or panic
- Taking over the pencil
- Comparing to siblings or classmates

SOCRATIC QUESTIONS — ASK THESE, WHATEVER THE TOPIC

You don't need to understand the maths to ask these — they work for any question, any age.

- **What is this question actually asking you to find?**
- **What do you already know that might help?**
- **Have you seen a problem a bit like this before?**
- **Can you explain your thinking to me, step by step?**
- **What have you tried so far?**
- **Where exactly does it start to feel tricky?**
- **Could you draw it, or use objects to show it?**
- **Does your answer seem about right? How could you check?**

Both stuck? That's OK. “Let's find out together” models exactly the resilience we want them to learn.

Your confidence and enthusiasm is contagious.
You don't need the answer — you need to stay curious.

Lorna Brown