

UNDERSTANDING WHY YOUR CHILD MIGHT BE STRUGGLING WITH MATH CONFIDENCE

SEPTEMBER 2025

WHAT IS MATH ANXIETY

Math anxiety is more than just disliking math. It's a real and powerful emotional response that can make children feel nervous, overwhelmed, or even scared when faced with math tasks. For some students, just seeing a word problem or being asked to explain their thinking can trigger stress, making it harder to focus or remember what they know



WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

CHILDREN WITH MATH ANXIETY MIGHT:

Avoid doing math or say "I hate math"

Get stomachaches or feel sick before doing math

Say things like "I'm just not a math person"

Get upset when they make a mistake

Freeze or panic when asked to answer a question in front of others

REMINDERS

Even confident students can feel anxious at times, especially if they worry about getting the "right" answer quickly or feel pressure to perform.



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WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

Math anxiety can develop when:

A child has repeated experiences of feeling confused or stuck

They compare themselves to others and feel like they don't measure up

They've been embarrassed or corrected harshly in front of others

Adults around them (even with good intentions) put too much pressure on them

They hear messages like "I was never good at math either"

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

Be **positive** about math, even if it wasn't your favourite subject

Praise effort, not speed or perfection

Let your child make mistakes and talk about them as a part of learning

Play games that involve math in fun and low-pressure ways

Ask open-ended questions like "how did you figure that out?" instead of jumping in with corrections

REMINDERS

Math confidence is just as important as math skill. When children feel safe, supported, and curious, they're more likely to take risks, persevere, and grow.