

6 STEPS TO STAMP OUT MATH ANXIETY



JO BOALER'S ADVICE FOR PARENTS.

Encourage children to play maths puzzles and games. Puzzles and games—anything with dice, really—will help kids enjoy maths and develop number sense, which is critically important.

Always be encouraging and never tell kids they are wrong when they are working on maths problems. Instead, find the logic in their thinking. For example, if your child multiplies 3 by 4 and gets 7, say, "Oh, I see what you are thinking. You are using what you know about addition to add 3 and 4. When we multiply, we have 4 groups of 3..."

Never associate maths with speed. It is not important to work quickly, and we now know that forcing kids to work quickly on maths is the best way to start maths anxiety for children, especially girls.

Never share with your children the idea that you were bad at maths at school or you dislike it—especially if you are a mother. Researchers found that as soon as mothers shared that idea with their daughters, their daughters' achievement went down.

Encourage number sense. What separates high and low achievers is having an idea of the size of numbers and being able to separate and combine numbers flexibly. For example, when solving $29+56$, if you take one from the 56 and make it $30+55$, it is much easier to work out.

Perhaps most important of all: Encourage a "growth mindset" to let students know that they have unlimited maths potential and that being good at maths is all about working hard. When they tell you something is hard for them or they have made a mistake, tell them, "That's wonderful—your brain is growing!"