

# Investing in early maths skills could mean the difference to academic success

By [Trish Pike](#)

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Investing in your child's education is not just about saving money to get them through school and into tertiary education. Investing in your child's education means futureproofing them to take on the challenges of the 21st century. And this means making sure they have the very best maths teaching available to them.



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Maths is not only important for success in some areas of academic study, it is vital to our lives on every level. Maths is a fundamental part of human thought and logic, and is integral to attempts to understand the world and ourselves.

While many people may complain that math is boring or complicated, the truth is that a life devoid of maths means that we go around experiencing the world on a much less interesting level than we could. For many parents though, maths is a pain in the neck. Many of us hated math in school and that residual hatred can carry through to our children.

However, [research suggests](#) early math skills are a better predictor of academic success than early reading skills.

Children start using math from very early on - counting, matching, sorting, ordering, or finding patterns. When a child gets used to recognising numbers or identifying shapes while doing everyday tasks with their family, they are much more confident when introduced to maths in a more structured context at school.



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Maths scares a lot of parents because of their own experiences with the subject. Unfortunately, this isn't something that goes away easily, and it is difficult for parents to get around this. Often then, parents tell their children about their own bad math experiences and that effectively gives your child a way out of doing well in the subject.

But, if you want your child to succeed academically, as a worker and a functioning adult in the 21st century, you need to be positive towards math. Take the math journey with your child because it is vital to their success later in life.

## The most important year for maths

I cannot emphasise enough that success in the first year of maths in high school is key. A positive approach to Grade 8 maths is vital - as soon as a child gets below 80% in a test in the 1st year of maths in high school, then intervention is needed immediately. It is no good leaving it until Grade 10, it's simply too late then.

As we all know, to do well in anything requires a lot of practice. As a parent, particularly, in the first year of high school, time should be spent making sure every exercise is completed. So often a response from a child is there is no maths homework. Then the parent should take the initiative to give them maths practice. Initially, there will be frustration, but they will soon see how much better they do.

It isn't enough that parents just want to help, they need to provide their children with additional examples and practice questions. The best way to do this is to find online resources or textbooks and textbooks specifically that have the answers in them. This will enable the child to practise and check their answers, empowering them to answer questions in the classroom.



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In the 21st century, it is a no brainer to leave school with a decent maths result. Once you have this, so many doors of opportunity open to you outside of school. When I say a decent result, I mean above 70% for maths.

The big thing is to remember that you are never going to get away from mathematics. This result is of course important for university applications but aside from this, some companies are using maths in job aptitude assessments as a vetting system.

## Here are just a few reasons why Maths is good for you:

- Research indicates that children who know maths can recruit certain brain regions more reliably, and have greater grey matter volume in those regions, than those who perform more poorly in maths.
- You use it every day. Maths can be helpful for balancing your budget because you will have a good understanding of how to make sure that your costs are less than the money you have.
- Maths helps us think analytically and have better reasoning abilities. Analytical thinking refers to the ability to think

critically about the world around us and reasoning is our ability to think logically about a situation.

- Maths is used in practically every career in some way. Even operating a cash register requires that one understands basic arithmetic. People working in a factory must be able to do mental arithmetic to keep track of the parts on the assembly line.
- To live in a mathematically-driven world and not know maths is like walking through an art museum with your eyes closed. Learning and appreciating maths can help you appreciate things that you would not otherwise notice about the world.
- Maths is the universal language. A maths equation doesn't need to be translated to another language to be understood by someone on the other side of the planet.

## Online maths learning

When it comes to finding online resources to build on what your children have learned, make sure you are going to a trustworthy site. Read reviews of others who have used this resource and make sure that your child is using these resources to go through topics they will be covering in class each term.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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