



For the love of maths

Maths specialist, Simona Tudoran, and Sue Laidlaw explore ways of encouraging maths at home

“Tell me and I will listen, show me and I will see, challenge me and I will learn. Do we expect children to learn a whole lot about brushes and colours before they start painting? Do we expect them to learn a whole lot about notes on lines before they start making music? Then why do we expect them to learn rules and techniques before they can enjoy making their own maths?”

As head of a lively and innovative prep school maths department, Simona Tudoran's main goal is to show her pupils that mathematics is an exciting subject and help them to fall in love with it. She had certainly succeeded within the classroom environment, but what if your child is not so inspired?

Parents can play a vital role in helping their children to develop confidence in maths within the home —and there does not have to be a text book in sight.

Here are some examples that might suit your child: If you are a parent of young children, simply involving them in cooking, helping you weigh ingredients or count the number of spoonfuls to add to a recipe sets the groundwork for confidence in formal maths.

Let your children use coins to pay for small items when out shopping and then let them count the change.

Even if you were never a keen mathematician at school, once you start to see the opportunities to explore maths in 'real life', it can become relevant and fun for everyone.

Brilliantly creative

There are also wonderful online resources for slightly older children. Here are three of them:

Mathletics.co.uk is a website where students from all around the world challenge each other in maths games.

One nine-year-old remarks: “The challenge that we are doing is fun because there are more pupils playing on it. We can learn from our mistakes, everyone wants to try and try again to get everything perfect.”

Take a look at this wonderful website, **nrich.maths.org/public**. Here you can find many maths problems from mathematical experts at the University of Cambridge, challenging children to challenge themselves.

Join the Math Cats in a land of

creative, open-ended math explorations. Show your children the most wonderful maths designs, hexagrams, string art and rotational symmetry designs, fractals and many more at **mathcats.com**.

Maths can be inspiring, accessible and above all brilliantly creative.

“Abstract mathematical thought is one of the greatest achievements of the human race and arguably the foundation of all human progress,” writes Alex Bellos, mathematician, broadcaster and writer.

Our children may not end up helping us work out our tax bill by inventing a digital calculator as Pascal, the seventeenth century French mathematician, did for his father (he had not been allowed to have formal maths lessons so taught himself).

We can, however, ensure that they grow up as confident and competent mathematicians and share the experience with our children along the way.

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Simona Tudoran is a widely respected mathematician and Head of Maths at Laidlaw Education. Visit them at Stand 67. laidlaweducation.co.uk 020 8487 9517