

Mental maths for children: seven games to try at home

Play to understand

Prepare paper and a few small objects. Start with one game. The child may count, draw or explain aloud. Look for a clear method before trying to get faster.

1. Make ten

Use 6, 3, 8 and 5. What must you add to each to make 10?

2. The hidden number

$? + 7 = 12$ | $14 - ? = 9$

These activities support regular practice; they do not measure a child's level on their own.

Make the sums practical

3. The little shop

One item costs 7 MAD and another costs 5 MAD. You pay with 20 MAD. How much change should you receive?

4. Doubles and halves

Find double 4, double 7, half of 12 and half of 18.

The shop prices are fictional. Use counters or paper rather than real money.

Explain your method

5. Bridge through ten

Calculate $8 + 5$ by splitting 5 into 2 and 3. Then use the same method for $9 + 4$.

6. True or false?

$6 + 7 = 13$ | $15 - 8 = 8$ | $9 + 9 = 18$

7. Target number

Use 3, 5 and 2 once each, with + and -, to make 10. Then write the same calculation in a different order.

Ask: "How did you work it out?" Two correct methods may be different. If the child gets tired, stop and return another time.

Check your answers

Game	Answer
1. Make ten	4, 7, 2, 5
2. The hidden number	5, 5
3. The little shop	$7 + 5 = 12$; $20 - 12 = 8$ MAD
4. Doubles and halves	8, 14, 6, 9
5. Bridge through ten	$8 + 2 + 3 = 13$; $9 + 1 + 3 = 13$
6. True or false?	True, false (the answer is 7), true.
7. Target number	$3 + 5 + 2 = 10$; $5 + 2 + 3 = 10$

Cut-out cards: shuffle the numbers and pick two to create an addition or a subtraction with a positive answer.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20

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