

Simple ways to help your child become fluent with their number bonds:

Use dice

Take it in turns to roll two dice. You score a point for correctly saying a number sentence about what the two numbers add up to (e.g. "Four plus 1 equals 5")

Why not score a bonus point if you can work out the 'difference'. (In our example, "Four minus 1 equals 3")

Extend by using four dice – two for each number!

Bonds Snap

Find a pack of cards and remove all the picture cards. There should now be forty cards left: four aces, four twos, etc. Starting with 20 cards each, take it in turns to turn over and deal a card. If both top cards add up to ten, shout 'SNAP'! The first person to shout it correctly wins all the cards on the table.

The winner is the first person to collect all the cards. If they are ready, why not play bonds to 9 instead? Or 11?

Count On & Count Back

Counting is incredibly powerful and also helps children when it comes to multiplying and dividing. This is an easy game for two players which needs no equipment at all. One of you chooses a number from the first column (the size of jump), and the other chooses a number from the second (the starting number). Taking it in turns, you must say the next number in sequence. So, if you chose to start with jumps of 2, and your child chooses to start at 7, the conversation would go (hopefully): You: "7" Child: "9" You: "11" Child: "13" etc. Stop when you get up to 50, or whenever you feel that your child is struggling, and swop roles. Repeat this until you have got to 50 at least 5 times. To play 'Count Back' start on a number around 50 and count back until you get to zero (or below!)

Use Dominoes

Similar to cards and dice, dominoes are great for generating numbers to add or find the difference between.



Play Shut The Box

Another game with two dice. Both write out the numbers from 1 to 9. Take it in turns to roll the dice and add them up. Cross off the total, or if you prefer, cross off any two numbers that make the total, or indeed any two numbers that make the total.

So, if you roll 3 and 4, you could cross off 7, or 2 and 5, or 1 and 6, or 3 and 4.

Assuming you can cross off two numbers (or their total), you can roll again. The aim of the game is to cross off all your numbers before becoming stuck, at which point play passes to your opponent. Once you have both become stuck (or succeeded), your remaining numbers become your final score – the aim is to have as low a score as possible (preferably zero!) So, a player whose card looked like this at the end would score 237.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Shopkeeper

Practise those all important adding and subtracting skills in a real life context by setting up a little shop.

Speed Cards

This is a good one for the more competitive mathematicians! Remove the picture cards (jacks, queens and kings) and all the black cards from a pack. You are left with the ace to ten of hearts and diamonds. Shuffle these then deal one face up. Deal the next card on top and your child has to add it on mentally and say the total out loud. Repeat until every card is dealt. You should finish on 110 if all calculations are correct. How fast can they do it? Extend this to taking away by starting on 100 and finishing on -10.

Fifteen

This game uses a single set of 1 - 9 cards. Lay them face up on the table in a row. Take it in turns to take a card from the centre. The object of the game is to take cards that add up to exactly 15 (aces count as 1), using exactly 3 cards.

For example, perhaps you started by taking the 8, then your opponent took the 3, then you took the 5, then your opponent realised you had 13 so took the 2. A great move would be to pick up the 6. Why? You now have an 8, a 6 and a 5. If your opponent tries to stop you getting $8 + 6 + 1$ you could pick up the 4, as $4 + 5 + 6$ is 15. As you can see, this game can always be heavily weighted in favour of the person who goes first. They cannot guarantee to win but they can guarantee never to lose if they play correctly! Does that sound familiar? If you are reminded of noughts and crosses you would not be far off!

