



**I DON'T
GET IT!**

**7 powerful tips
to make math
make sense**

by Kelli Pearson

confused /kun-fyoozd/ *adjective*

Lack of understanding; unable to think clearly; baffled or bewildered

“I can’t do this! I don’t get it!”

Her forehead is scrunched up in angry furrows, her hands clenched with effort as she struggles to make sense of the problem in front of her.

Her eyes glisten with tears of frustration. (Yours do, too.) She stares hard at the page, as if willpower alone will make it start to make sense.

Yesterday, the two of you spent hours working together on these exact problems and she finally seemed to get it. But today it’s like she’s never seen them before. She’s back at square one, and you have no idea how to help her.

Memorization of facts and rules doesn’t work for your child. To her, they are utterly random, with no sense or connection.

She needs to think about math differently, through images, context, and pictures. Explaining how to do the math won’t help her; she wants to know *why*.

One of the best ways you can help her understand and get better at math is by playing games. Math games help her get better at math as she plays, so she can feel confident and successful in math.

Miss Brain’s Cool Math Games is a terrific resource that I highly recommend for kids who want a fun way to get better at math.

The 7 tips in this PDF will help her start to learn math in a way that is fun, respects her unique learning style, and makes sense.

7 Powerful Tips To Make Math Make Sense

1. **"Show me the part that you DO understand."** Help her see what she's already doing right, before addressing what she's doing wrong.
2. **Ask, "How did you do that problem? Show me step by step."** As she walks you through her steps, watch for where she went wrong. Then say, "You did *this* part and *this* part right. Something went wrong right here," and help her with that exact bit.
3. **Play a math game.** Games put math in context so it makes sense, and the repetition of games gives plenty of practice to help her get better at math.
4. **Watch a video.** Search an unfamiliar term on YouTube (*ex: multiply with arrays*). She'll understand more after watching the video, and you'll have a better idea how to help her.
5. **Draw a picture.** This is a great way to illustrate hard concepts like multiplication, division, and fractions, or to make sense of word problems.
6. **"Solve it in any way that makes sense to you."** Counting on fingers, drawing a picture, watching a video first...encourage her to use all her tools to figure out the answer.
7. **Put math in context.** Explore fractions in baking, or counting money in the grocery store.

Helpful Links and Resources

Miss Brain's Cool Math Games is a book bursting with fun, simple games that help kids get better at math as they play.

Struggling kids make sense of math as they play, and they become more confident as they see their skills improve (and win a few games!).

Kids are able to make sense of math as they play, and they become more confident as they have fun learning new skills. For grades 1-3 and grades 3-5.

Artful Math is a site devoted to helping girls fall in love with math. You'll find information, tips, and fun resources to help your daughter tap into her strengths and get excited about math.

Have questions about how to help your child be less anxious about math? Contact Kelli.

