



IS FINGER COUNTING OKAY?

As you research into what maths has shown you, there are conflicting theories about children using their fingers to count. Some people say it's good to let children use their fingers to learn numbers because it gives children a way to "see" the numbers as they count them.

But it doesn't work when the numbers go past 10. What happens when you run out of fingers? Start counting toes? And then with adding long numbers and multiple digit numbers? How does one keep track of all those numbers and count them all on fingers and toes?

One danger in encouraging finger counting is that the child may become reliant on finger counting and unable to transition to rote memorisation. Most parents we speak to regarding their struggling maths students is that their child is still counting on their fingers to solve basic single-digit addition problems. This restricts their understanding of mathematics as a concept and limits future maths abilities.

"Students of all ages are unfairly judging themselves as "just not good in math" because of the missing tool of fact automaticity. It is important to think of fact memorization recall as a vital tool for math success. For many students, their reliance on finger counting is preventing this tool from developing."*

Think about what you experience when you roll a dice and see a 5 and a 6. Through repetitive exposure of the same pattern combination, you eventually do not need to count the individual dots and know immediately that the combination is 11 and you move eleven places forward on the board.



Research shows that rectangular and dot arrangements are the easiest to retain in long-term visual memory. That's why we teach using multi-sensory blocks with scored rectangular "unit numbers" on them, as well as the specific use of colours in order to associate numbers. The child learns to see the number, recognise it and know the quantity it represents.

Maybe you are just discovering the effect finger counting is having on your child's ability to find success as maths concepts become more complex. Maybe you have just noticed your child has started using their fingers to count.

Whatever your experience of finger counting, its important to change this as soon as you can. At Maths Australia, we empower your child from the basics of mathematics and introduce strong foundations throughout the early learning stages. We support an easy and seamless transition from understanding numbers and their values to more in-depth, complex maths equations. This only happens if you have strong foundations in concrete methodologies.

For more information, call Megan on 0432 264 822
or email us at info@mathsaustralia.com.au

* Sources <https://demmelearning.com/learning-blog/counting-fingers/>



To find out more about the award-winning
Math-U-See program,

Contact us directly on 0432 264 822

Or email us at info@mathsaustralia.com.au

www.mathsaustralia.com.au