Helping your child with mental calculations

Most calculations we carry out each day, we do in our heads. The methods we use when we work things out in our head are often not the same methods we use when we write down a sum.

How can you help your child to do mental calculations?

When adding small numbers count on by ones. Start with the larger and count on by ones to add the smaller number.

When adding larger numbers there a range of ways to add numbers other than counting by ones.

For example, to find the answer to 25 + 89 children could:

- Make the 89 up to 90, then add 10 and then 14
- Add 20 and 80 to make 100, then add 9 and 5 to make 14, then add 100 and 14
- Split 25 into 10, 10 and 5. Add 10 twice to 89 then add 5.

What can you do at home?

- Ask your child how they mentally work out the answer to a question. Explain how you would work it out. If your child can not work out the answer mentally give them objects to use for counting.
- When shopping, ask your child to add the total of the items and work out the change.
- When playing games use two dice and add the numbers
- Involve you child in working out costs for a holiday
- When watching and playing sport add up the scores and find the difference between the scores.