

WHY PLAY GAMES?

People of all ages love to play games. They are fun and motivating. Games provide students with opportunities to explore fundamental number concepts, such as the counting sequence, one-to-one correspondence, and computation strategies.

Engaging mathematical games can also encourage students to explore number combinations, place value, patterns, and other important mathematical concepts. Further, they provide opportunities for students to deepen their mathematical understanding and reasoning.

The research about how students develop fact mastery indicates that drill techniques and timed tests do not have the power that mathematical games and other experiences have. Timed tests encourage children to think that being good at maths requires them to be fast which it does not. It is more important that children can visualise the numbers and spot patterns.

Games are an important tool for learning. Advantages include:

- ▶ Encourages strategic mathematical thinking
- ▶ Develops fluency with calculations (accuracy, efficiency, flexibility)
- ▶ Meaningful practice
- ▶ Encourages children to test intuitive ideas and problem solving strategies
- ▶ Motivation and enjoyment
- ▶ Building self-confidence and positive attitudes towards Maths
- ▶ Develops familiarity with our number system
- ▶ Games can allow children to operate at different levels of thinking and to learn from each other

In fact, research shows that greater learning can occur through games than more formal activities!

