

Coach's guide

part 1

Number Quest



www.flexprogram.org

TO TRAIN WITH NUMBER QUEST

Number Quest is an adaptive training program designed to train core math skills such as number sense, the inner mental number line and pattern recognition. Number Quest is based on current research into how mathematical skills are developed and learned and has been evaluated with over 200 pupils with good results.

To implement successful training with Number Quest we recommend that you make thorough preparations. For maximum effect it is important that all training days are carried out and that the child consistently tries to do her best. On www.flexprogram.org you will find all checklists and diagrams that are meant to be an aid in training with Number Quest. Before you begin a training period, it's a good idea to go through the training material and ensure that no details of the planning have been forgotten.

HOW DOES THE TRAINING WORK?

The actual training consists of a number of computerized exercises. The difficulty of the exercises is automatically adjusted to the individual's performance, so that the demands always are at an optimal level. The training programme comprises 25 training sessions. Each training session takes between 20 and 40 minutes depending on age and individual factors. During each training week 4-5 training sessions should be carried out resulting in a total duration of 5-7 weeks.

COACH

The coach's main function is to help the trainee to maintain motivation throughout the training by offering continuous support and feedback. The trainee will very likely, sometime during the training, complain that it is hard to train and show signs of reduced motivation.

There are various ways to help the trainee to get through these motivational dips and to carry on training even though it is inconvenient. However there is no general method that works for everyone. Each individual is motivated by different things and it is important that you trust your own teaching skills and use your experience of working with the person that you are coaching.

The goal is that the trainee maintains maximum effort and continues training throughout the training period. It is best if one person can be responsible for training during the entire period to provide continuity, but also because the coach will then get a good understanding of what facilitates training for that trainee.

LOCATION

Sometimes your choices are limited as regards the training location. As with everything else you have to be realistic and make the best of what is available. Perhaps the most important thing to consider when choosing location for training is that it is quiet. Preferably choose a secluded place where no one will turn up unannounced.

It is also good to have as bare of a room as possible. The fewer visual distractors the easier it is to focus. If possible training should, for the same reason, always be in the same room. This will create a safe environment with a limited number of new impressions and all the focus can be placed on training.

CONTINUITY

Continuity is a key word that should permeate the entire training. Ideally, the training should ideally take place the same time of day, in the same room, with the same trainer for each training session.

Ability to concentrate can vary from day to day, but also depending on what time it is. Just before lunch, when blood sugar levels are low, or right after lunch when digestion is at work are times you should avoid training if possible. The same applies in the afternoon when a school day draws to an end. It is best for most children to train in the morning for example shortly after they have started school. However, it is important to remember to always adjust the time according to what works best for the trainee.

Always training at the same time of day means that similar conditions will be given for all training sessions. The risk of irregular training is that some days training will be carried out when the child's ability is at its peak and some days when it is at its lowest; this can affect how it feels to train. If you have been training on Monday at a time when you feel that you cope well and then train on Tuesday after lunch and physical education, the risk is that the training is less fun and that it is

difficult to do one's best. It is a great advantage to train when individuals feel refreshed and alert in order to create a positive atmosphere for the training.

MOTIVATION

Motivation is central to training to have as good an effect as possible. A central aim of this booklet is to give you, as trainer, relevant information to train with Number Quest. We hope it can help create a proper motivation in you as trainer. It is also important to convey information to the trainee and to important people around them, so the training feels meaningful for everyone involved. If everyone involved is motivated, this will contribute to a better atmosphere for the training and increase the likelihood that training will be conducted well.

REWARD SYSTEM

In many cases when working with children, encouragement and praise are enough to maintain motivation. Intensive math skills training is often perceived as mentally demanding, and as a result, problems with motivation can occur at some point during training. A strategy to counter this and that has proven effective is to include a reward system. It is important to stress that the rewards should not consist of big things. Usually it is appropriate to let the parents implement the rewards, even if training takes place at school.

Rewards must be reasonable but at the same time not too mundane. It is important that the rewards have a motivating effect on the child. Examples of rewards can be to rent a movie, play games together, get to stay up a little later on Friday night or go to the swimming pool together.

It is important to emphasize from the beginning that rewards are handed out after each five-day period of training that is completed. If the child is clear about this from the beginning means the risk for conflicts diminishes. The parents should never threaten to take away rewards. It is also important that the rewards are always handed out on time and that agreements are kept on both sides.

The objective of the reward system is to come up with something that the parents or the school feel is realistic and that really helps the child's motivation. As training becomes harder and the child often finds it more difficult to maintain motivation as training progresses, it is a good idea to rank the rewards that you choose. The first can be something small such as letting the child choose their favourite dish for dinner on Friday night. The last week maybe you will go to the movies together or do something else that the child is very fond of, but may not be able to do so often.

Always ensure that the rewards are filled out in the logbook before training begins so that there are no misunderstandings during training. For guidance on how to go about selecting the appropriate rewards see the tab "Material" at www.flexprogram.org.

THE LOGBOOK

There is a lot to keep track of before training can begin. The logbook serves several purposes, but the most important function is to make preparations for the training as easy as possible. The logbook contains the following things:

- Information for the child on training with Number Quest
- Reward schedule, where rewards are to be written before training begins.
- Overview of every week of training where the child fills out completed training days.

Always use a logbook when coaching a child training with Number Quest to ensure control over training and to make sure that no details are overlooked. The logbook can be downloaded from www.flexprogram.org.

TRAINING SCHEDULE

The training schedule gives you as trainer an overview of when and where training is to take place and who will be in charge of the training on each day. In the training schedule you should before training begins fill out the following:

- The location where training will take place.
- The dates when training is planned to be conducted.
- Who will coach each day of training?

TEMPORARY COACH

As trainer for a child in school, you should make preparations for what happens if you are sick. Be sure to have a temporary trainer who has good understanding of the training and who can keep the training going when you are absent.

