

Activities for children

We all use maths every day, often without realising it. We believe that every child can develop the numeracy skills they will need, both at school and throughout their lives. Helping your child feel confident about maths now gives them a head start.

Here are some ideas for activities you can do with your child to help them see the maths in everyday life.



Around the house

There's maths in all the everyday activities you already do together.

There are plenty of opportunities to play with numbers, and help your child feel positive about maths. Always point out that you are doing maths - this helps children understand that maths isn't scary.

Tips & ideas

Talk about time. For example, get them to work out what time you need to leave the house to get to school on time.

Cooking. Measure ingredients and set the timer together. Get them to work out how much more food will you need if extra people are coming for dinner.

Talk about the shape and size of objects. Look online for interesting facts, like tallest and shortest people, or biggest and smallest buildings etc.

When you are sharing food like pizza or cake, ask your child to help you share it equally between the number of people eating.

Solve maths problems at home. For example, ask them how many apples to buy at the shop and why, or how long will it take you to get to Gran's house if you go to the library on the way.

Collect information and create a tally chart, for example to find out the family's favourite animal or fruit etc.

Make patterns with objects, colouring pencils, paint or Play-Doh, and build structures with Lego or boxes

Maths and money

Teaching your children about money is a great opportunity to start do some simple maths.

Show your child how to use money, with real money at the shops or pretend money at home, and talk to your child about where money comes from.

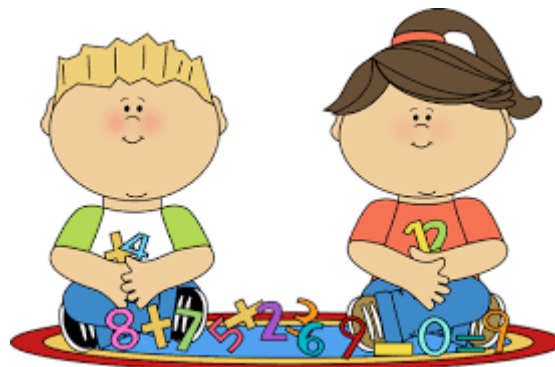


Tips & ideas

Play the coin game. Trace around coins and colour in the shapes; ask your child to match the coin to the image and talk about each one's name. (Note: toddlers may put coins in their mouth, so always keep an eye out!)

At the shops. Ask your child to guess how much items will cost together. Give them small amounts of change and ask them what they think they can buy with it. Talk about the items you buy; which are more expensive and which are cheaper? Which are heavier, which are lighter?

Play shops. You could make pretend money or use Monopoly money for your play shop, and use items around the house as shop items. By 'buying' things with play money, your child begins to understand that different things cost different amounts of money.



Games

Have fun with maths!

Games help children develop a positive attitude towards maths.

Whenever your child uses maths in play, explain that they're using maths. This will help them realise how much we all use maths every day

Tips & ideas

Play with cards. Take 2 cards and add the numbers together, the player with the highest number wins.

Play with blocks. Get them to think about size, colour, shape, weight and texture. Create patterns and structures, ask them to guess how many blocks they could pile up without them falling down.

Play 'I spy' with numbers and shapes.

Play with containers. For example, how many socks can you fit in the box, which container holds the most sand, water or beads etc.

Play the Clue Game. Pick an object and give your child clues to that object by using directional language, such as up, down, over, under, between, through, beside, behind, in front of, and on top of. Make the game more challenging by giving two part directions e.g. "It's on top of the table and to the left of the TV".

Board Games are great for developing skills. Try games like Connect 4, Jenga or Snakes and Ladders



Out and about

Practise using maths with your child outside your home!

Exploring your local community and playing sports provides loads of opportunities to start thinking about numbers and keeping active.

Tips & ideas

Go on a shape hunt. How many circles, squares, rectangles or triangles can your child find? Are they 2D or 3D? Try getting them to look for patterns and symmetry.

Play outside games that use counting. Hopscotch, hide and seek, What's the Time Mr Wolf, skipping or hula hooping are a great place to start. Practise times tables by counting in multiples e.g. 4, 8, 12, 16, or 7, 14, 21, 28.

Dance. Ask your child to create dance routines along to their favourite songs.

Sport. Sports are the perfect chance to think about speed, scores, time and angles. Get competitive; try out different angles to score from, ask them how many star jumps can they do in a minute.

Ask them to give you directions to local landmarks or important places. Get to work out how long each stage of the journey takes.

Use sticks for shape challenges. Ask them how many triangles can they make with 9 sticks etc.

Explore the local area. Ask them to guess how many buildings do they think are on the street, how far is it to the nearest river or How many dogs and cats live in your town. Ask for the reasons behind their answers.



Books and TV

Books, TV and radio are a great way to keep children excited about numbers. Ask them about the maths in any story they read or TV programme they watch.

Books

- The Shopping Basket by John Burningham.
- 365 Penguins by Jean-Luc Fromental.
- We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen.
- The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes by Gary Rubinstein - great for teaching kids that it's OK to make mistakes and that you can learn from them

Radio

BBC Megamaths is a radio show about a team of detectives on a maths mission to solve mental maths problems.

TV and film

Whatever they're watching, there's opportunities to talk about maths. Ask them questions, such as how fast are the cars going in Top Gear, how many votes are being cast on Strictly Come Dancing or how many years ago did the people on Gory Games live?



Top tips for parents and families:

Be positive about maths. Don't say things like "I can't do maths" or "I hated maths at school"; your child might start to think like that themselves.

Point out the maths in everyday life. Include your child in activities involving maths such as using money, cooking and travelling.

Praise your child for effort rather than talent - this shows them that by working hard they can always improve.