



First Steps in Maths



We hope you enjoy working with your child in school. Here are a few ideas of how you can support your child's learning at home.

Make maths part of your child's day.

- Point out to your child the many ways in which maths is used in everyday activities.
- Include your child in everyday activities that involve maths – shopping, measuring ingredients and counting out plates and cutlery for tea.
- Play games and do puzzles with your child that involves maths. They may focus on direction or time, logic and reasoning, sorting or estimating.
- In addition to maths tools (eg. ruler & calculator), use handy household objects, such as a measuring cup and containers of various shapes and sizes, when doing maths with your child.

Numbers and Calculating

- **Count everything!** Count toys, kitchen utensils and items of clothing as they come out of the dryer. Help your child count by pointing to and moving the objects as you say each number out loud. Count forwards and backwards from different starting places. Use household items to practise adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing.
- **Sing counting songs and read counting books.** Songs and rhymes such as “One, Two, Buckle My Shoe” and “Ten Little Monkeys”, make learning fun for children. Counting books also capture children's imagination, by using pictures of interesting things to count and to add.
- **Discover the many ways in which numbers are used inside and outside your home.** Take your child on a “number hunt”. Point out how numbers are used on the t.v, microwave and telephone. Spot numbers in books and newspapers. Look for numbers on signs in your street. Encourage your child to tell you whenever he or she discovers a new way in which numbers are used.
- **Use number flashcards** to recognise and order numbers to 10 (and then to 20).
- **Play games using a dice.** Learn to recognise the number of spots and to take turns.
- **Ask your child to help you solve everyday number problems.** “We need six tomatoes to make our sauce for dinner, and we have only two. How many more do we need to buy?” “You have two pillows in your room and your sister has two pillows in her room. How many pillowcases do I need to wash?”
- **Using money** – recognising coins 1p, 2p, 5p, and 10p. Counting pennies or two pence coins.
- **Estimate everything!** Estimate footsteps from your front door to the edge of your garden... how many cartons of milk you need for the week... how many carrots in a bag etc. Then test it out to see how close you are.

Shape, Space and Measures

- **Baking** – weigh/measure the ingredients, set a timer.
- **Pair up socks** – look at the different colours and sizes.
- **Measure items found around the house.** Find objects that are longer or shorter than a shoe or a string or a ruler. Together, use a shoe to measure the length of a floor mat. Fill different containers with sand or with water in the bath, and see which containers hold more and which hold less.
- **Go on a “Shape Hunt”** to look for shapes in the environment. Search for 2D shapes (circle, square, rectangle, triangle) and 3D shapes (cube, cuboid, cylinder, cone, sphere).
- **Play “I spy”, looking for different shapes.** “I spy something that is round.” “I spy something that is rectangular.” “I spy something that looks like a cone.”
- **Have a “Shape Picnic”.** Cut sandwiches into squares or triangles. Have other differently shaped food e.g. Doritos, pizza, oranges etc.
- **Compare and organize household items.** Take cereal boxes or cans of vegetables from the cupboard and have your child line them up from tallest to shortest.
- **Sort household items.** As your child tidies up toys or clothing, discuss which items should go together and why. Show your child how you organize food items in the fridge – fruit together, vegetables together, drinks on one shelf and condiments on another. Encourage your child to sort other household items – crayons by colour, cutlery by type or shape, coins by denomination.
- **Talk about time.** Ask your child to check the time on the clock when he or she goes to school, eats meals and goes to bed. Learn the days of the week – say them in order and know which one comes next. Which are weekend days?
- **Hide a toy and use directional language to help your child find it.** Give clues using words and phrases such as *up, down, over, under, between, through* and *on top of*.
- **Look for patterns in storybooks and songs.** Many children’s books and songs repeat lines or passages in predictable ways, allowing children to recognize and predict the patterns.
- **Create patterns using your body.** Clap and stamp your foot in a particular sequence (clap, clap, stomp), have your child repeat the same sequence, and then create variations of the pattern together. Teach your child simple dances that include repeated steps and movements.
- **Hunt for patterns around your house and your neighbourhood.** Your child will find patterns in clothing, in wallpaper, in tiles, on toys and among trees and flowers in the park. Encourage your child to describe the patterns found. Try to identify the features of the pattern that are repeated.
- **Use household items to create and extend patterns.** Lay down a row of spoons pointing in different directions in a particular pattern (up, up, down, up, up, down) and ask your child to extend the pattern.

Some websites you may find useful:

www.ictgames.com

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks1/

www.familylearning.org.uk

www.bigeyedowl.co.uk (for songs & rhymes)

[“Purple Mash” via the school website.](#) (password needed)