

Information for parents

Helping your young child with maths

From birth your child has been learning about maths. Maths is everywhere around us. Talking to your child and letting him or her take part in everyday activities like going to the shop, cooking, or even setting the table, helps your child with maths. Knowing simple nursery rhymes, getting dressed, learning to take turns or enjoying pretend games, such as working in a post office or restaurant, all help your child to understand number, pattern and shape, measuring and sorting.

You can help your child to solve maths problems every day by, for example, working out how to share sweets equally, by making sure everyone has a knife and fork at dinner time, or by helping him or her to measure out enough paper to wrap a present. Even when your child starts school, you can continue to play a key role in helping him or her to understand and enjoy maths.

Here are some tips on how you can do this:

- Give your child containers to play with.
 - Talk about: holds more/less or empty/full.
 - Try activities such as baking or playing with sand/water.
- Encourage your child to tidy up toys.
- Try comparing them: This toy is heavier/lighter, or bigger/smaller than.
- Make patterns using buttons or clothes pegs.
 - Talk about: pattern in colour, size and shape.
- Say simple counting rhymes together:
Ten Green Bottles.
- Give your child maths objects to play with: measuring tapes, rulers, phones, watches, jugs, weighing scales.
- Look at the clock: time for school/bed.
- Ask your child to help with sorting: matching socks, or putting things in the fridge/press.
- Look at shapes: *How many circles can you see in the kitchen? What shapes can you find in the garden?* Look at books and pick out different shapes.
- Draw attention to the days of the week and time of the day: today, yesterday, tomorrow, morning, night.

- Look at numbers: on cars, buses, in shops. Have number hunts to see who can spot the most numbers.
- Measure your child: How tall is he/she? What is his/her shoe size? Use words like big/small, wide/narrow, tall/short.
- Play counting games: counting up and down stairs. Play simple games using a dice: *Snakes and ladders*, *Bingo* or *Hopscotch*.
- Draw or make shapes using sand, pasta, crayons, cardboard cut-outs. Talk about them: square/circle, straight/curved.
- Make a pretend shop using tins and packets of food.
- Use real or pretend money.
- Talk about: *How many? How much? What change did we get?*