

Making sense of maths

Understanding numbers and how maths is used are essential skills for your children. Think out loud and get your children involved when you use numbers so they see just how useful maths is every day.

What can I do?

- In the kitchen: Prepare meals together. Ask questions like **How many** plates do we need? Get your children to **measure** ingredients. Talk about **time** and **how long** things take to cook. Help them learn to read analogue and digital clocks.
- During bath time: **Count** how many mugs of water it takes to fill a plastic jug.
- In the laundry: Get your children to help you **sort** the clothes into piles of colours, and count and **match** socks.
- In the car: **Count** the number of cars you pass. Count the number of cars by colour. Keep a **tally** and see which colour 'wins'.
- While shopping: Ask your children to **count** the number of items in the trolley. Work out **how many** of each item is needed. Point out **3D** objects like cylinders. When unpacking the shopping ask them to find and group the heavy, light and tall items.
- When walking around the neighbourhood: Point out house numbers and talk about **odd** and **even** numbers. **Count** the number of houses in your street. Point out **shapes**. Talk about **directions** such as **left** and **right**.



Games like playing shop help children learn that maths is useful in everyday life.



Suggested reading

1. **One is a Snail, Ten is a Crab** by A P Sayre and J Sayre
2. **Edward the Emu** by K Sheena and R Clement
3. **Rosie's Walk** by P Hutchins
4. **Fifteen Pigs on a Pirate Ship** by P Edwards and G Parkin
5. **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** by E Carle

Fun activities

1. Treasure hunt: This helps children practise their reading and learn about directions and positions. Write directions for your children to find clues which tell them where to look for the next clue, continuing until the 'treasure' is found. For example: Look **under** your pillow; look **behind** the kitchen door; look **on top** of the television; look **in** the washing basket.
2. Mystery number: Think of a number. Ask your children to guess what it is as you give clues like *My number is **more** than 10 but **less** than 19. It is an **even** number. Sometimes it's called a dozen.* Include addition, subtraction and multiplication clues to make the game more advanced.
3. Balloon tap: Count how many times you can tap a balloon to each other without it touching the floor. When it hits the floor, start again.
4. Numberplate search: Look for a numberplate that has a 1 in it. Then find a plate with a 2 in it; then 3 and so on. Ask your children to **add** the numbers on the plate together; or take the **smallest** number away from the **biggest** number. Look at the plate's digits and ask *What number do they make? What is the biggest number you can make with those digits? What is the smallest number?*

Your partnership with the school is really important. Talk with your child's teacher regularly about how your child is progressing.



It is important to encourage and praise children when they are learning something new. Even if they make mistakes they are having a go and that is good.