



# How to Support Your Child With Maths

## Some Suggestions for Parents

We are often asked to suggest ways in which parents can help their child to learn at home. These sheets are designed to address that request. It is vital for children to see that mathematics is all around them and to encourage them to use and apply their knowledge to a variety of everyday situations. The more support you can give, in identifying and discussing mathematical opportunities as they arise, the more likely it is that children will start to see a real purpose for acquiring mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding.

THE BEST SUPPORT IS FUN AND ENJOYABLE FOR EVERYONE!!

### 1. COUNTING

Before we start to calculate we need to be able to count accurately

Count everything!

Count toys in and out of boxes and cupboards

Count clothing in and out of the dryer

Count letters which arrive in the post

Board games – play games with dice

Play any traditional board games *e.g. Snakes and Ladders, Ludo*. Practise counting on and avoid the mistake of double counting

Count the money in their money box – piles of 10, piles of 1's

Count out food - grapes, potatoes etc

Count in 2's, 5's and 10's forwards and backwards

Count forwards and backwards from different starting places

Practise 'skip counting'. Roll two dice, one to determine a starting number and the other to determine the counting interval

Ask your child to try counting backwards from 10, 20 or even 100

Sing counting songs *e.g. traditional rhymes such as 'One, Two Buckle My Shoe'*

Spot and count Christmas trees in the window

Car journey counting – *e.g. red cars, letter boxes, buses etc*

## **2. ENJOY STORIES, RHYMES & GAMES**

Maths from stories – Enjoy good books! When you read stories, notice and discuss any maths that arise from the stories – numbers, time, shapes, patterns, money

Dice – Play games with dice

Counting on board games- Play any board games involving moving counters on and/or back

Make up games using playing cards and dice – Try rolling dice and add the numbers that come up. For older children add the totals until you reach a target number *e.g.* 50. Play the game backwards to practise subtraction

Play 'Broken Calculator' – Pretend that the number 6 key on the calculator is broken and cannot be pressed. Without it, how could you make the number 6, 16, 26 etc. appear on the screen? (Sample answers  $8 - 2 =$ ,  $20 - 4$ ,  $13 + 3$ ) Ask other questions using different 'broken keys'

Scoring games – play games such as skittles or quoits. How many can you score? Add up the scores. Start with a score of 50, subtract the score each time, see who reaches zero first

Create patterns using your body – clap and stamp your foot in a particular sequence (clap, clap, stamp) Have your child repeat the same sequence, then create variations of the pattern together. Challenge your child to make a pattern for you

### **3. Practise Number Facts**

Learn number bonds of 10 – (Reception and Year 1)

Learn and practise addition and subtraction number bonds of all numbers up to 20 (Years 1 – 6)

Count in 2's , 5' and 10's

Have fun practising number facts

Cards play snap – try calling snap on pairs that make 10

Play pairs

For older children – play cribbage – excellent for mental maths and numbers totalling 15 and up to 31

Play dominoes

### **4. Estimate**

Estimate the number of steps from your front door to the pavement. Then walk with your child to find out how many there really are, counting steps as you go

Estimate how many litres of milk your family will need for the week. Keep a count and at the end of the week, count how many you actually used

Estimate the time needed for a trip. If the trip is expected to take 20 minutes when will you have to leave?

Estimate how much you recycle – check at the end of the week

Remember that an estimate is a reasonable guess – you are not expected to be exactly right and shouldn't be upset if you're not!

### **5. Talk Maths**

Meal times – give plenty of opportunities for talk *e.g. Have we got enough chairs? Have we laid enough places? Can everyone have a jelly? How many sandwiches do*

*we need? Are there enough sandwiches for two each? What shapes can I cut the sandwiches into? How many cups can I fill from this jug?*

Notice numbers – look at numbers around you in the environment – house numbers, interesting or quirky number plates, road signs with numbers on them etc

Number hunt – Discover numbers in the home or environment incidentally – or take your child on a ‘number hunt’ in your home or neighbourhood. How do we use numbers for the television, the microwave or the telephone? Encourage your child to tell you whenever he or she discovers a new way in which numbers are used

Giant numbers – Spot numbers in book and newspapers. What is the biggest number they can find?

Talk about time – Look at the clock when your child goes to school, eats meals and goes to bed. Read the time to your child and encourage them to notice o’clock, then half hours etc. Together look up the time of a television programme your child wants to watch. Record on a calendar the times of favourite activities

Spot maths in pictures – estimate amounts, notice patterns, discuss consequences

## **6. Everyday maths**

Sort out - tidy cupboards ordering different sized tins, packets etc.

Cooking – follow recipes and weigh and measure using and reading the scales – become familiar with metric standard units of measurement

Boil an egg for three minutes – let your child use a sand timer and find out how long that takes. How many times can you write your name/hop/touch your toes in 3 minutes?

Decorating – talk about how many pots of paint, rolls of paper

Gardening or out walking – how many paving slabs? Do they fit together? Look at patterns of bricks

Shopping – help children become familiar with different coins. Allow them to handle real money. How many pennies do you need to trade for a 20p coin?

Travel – How much was the bus/train fare? How much for two people, return fare?

Measuring – ask your child to help measuring fabric, bookshelves etc.

Reading an outside thermometer – help them to make a record of the daily temperature outside. Does the temperature affect their activities?

## **7. Be positive and enthusiastic about maths!**

Let your child know that **everyone** can learn maths

Show your child that **you** think maths is important and fun

Point out ways in which family members use maths in their jobs

Be positive about your own maths abilities. Try to avoid saying “I’m hopeless at maths” or “ I hated maths at school”

Encourage your child to be persistent if a problem seems difficult

Praise your child when he/she makes an effort, and share in the excitement when he or she solves a problem or understands something for the first time.

Do maths problems with your child for fun

If your child is reluctant – relax and focus on fun activities. Let your child see you enjoying numbers

Encourage them to explain their reasoning

Have fun!

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