

It is important to remember that children learn best through direct, first hand experiences. Every child will learn and develop mathematical skills at his/her own pace. They will need lots of opportunities to develop, practice and consolidate their skills and plenty of praise and encouragement for all their efforts.



Supporting Early Mathematical Skills

As with literacy, parents play an important part in helping to support and develop children's early mathematical skills. We use maths in our everyday lives and it is important for young children to be aware of this. It is important to talk to your child to develop their understanding of the language of maths.

Early experiences need to be "real" and first hand for a young child to understand **what** it is they are doing and the reasons **why**. It is crucial that young children develop positive attitudes towards maths and that they are happy and confident when approaching and solving mathematical problems.



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Tips and Advice for Parents:

Here are some examples of simple activities you can do together at home to support and develop mathematical skills.

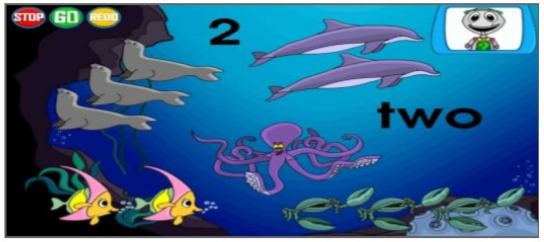
Number Songs: Sing number songs and action rhymes, for example, "One , Two, Three, Four, Five" and "Ten Green Bottles".





Number Stories: For example, "The Three Little Pigs", "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs".

Matching: Objects one-to-one. Three people are eating lunch. How many plates do we need? How many forks do we need? If I have 2 forks already, how many more do I need?



Developing Mathematical Language

- **Number names:** Count as you walk up the stairs, *please give me three teddies,* pass me the brick with the number 2 on. Identify numbers that are "more", "less", or "fewer". How many "altogether"? How many if I take away one?
- **Shape:** Point out the different shapes to be found around your home (plates, cups, windows, bricks). Identify shape patterns in the environment (tablecloths, socks).



- **Size:** Identify big, small, bigger, smaller, large, tall, short, long objects around the home.
- **Measure:** How many capfuls of water will fill the plastic bottle in the bath? Which bottle holds more? Which bottle holds less?



Compare the weight of shopping bags. Which bag is heavy/ light? Weigh ingredients to make a cake. Keep a wall chart record of the height of your child. Does it change? Why?



- **Position:** Describe the position of toys around the room: *on* the table, under, in, behind, in front of, next to.
- **Time:** Sequence familiar events in your child's day (meal times, recipes). Investigate the length of journeys in the car, when walking and on an aeroplane. Observe and discuss timetables, simple maps and routes.



- **Number Symbols:** Identify number symbols in the environment. For example on houses, on signs, around the supermarket and on car registration plates.
- **Money:** Handle real money in the shops. Pay with coins. How much change have you got?

