DOING MATHS TOGETHER AT HOME

Children need lots of experiences in making, counting, drawing and talking about numbers. Make connections for your child by explaining how numbers and counting are a part of everyday life. The activities below will help your child develop these skills.

You may feel that the maths your child is doing at school is different from how you were taught, but you will still be able to support your child in many ways.

Playing shop

Collect food and grocery items and label them with prices written on sticky notes or prices cut out of shopping catalogues.

58. Talk about how we pay for items using notes and coins.

59. Make paper money or use play money to buy and sell goods from the shop.

60. Order the food items by height (tallest to the shortest) or by cost (least expensive to most expensive).

61. Introduce kitchen scales to the shop to weigh some foods such as a box of tea bags or a bag of rice and order items by weight.

PLAYING games

62. Play I Spy or other games to identify shapes, numbers and patterns.
63. Dice are a great addition to any toy collection. Roll the dice and say, make or write the numbers identified. Roll the dice and add the numbers together to find the total.
64. Play number games online with your child.
    Try this website: **http://www.abc.net.au/countusin/**

MAKING patterns

Recognising and making patterns are important maths skills for exploring numbers, shapes and symmetry.

65. Identify and explain visual patterns on clothing, wrapping paper, crockery, cards and furniture.
66. Use coloured pegs, blocks, beads or cutlery to begin a pattern for your child to continue. For example, red, blue, white, red, blue, white.
67. Encourage your child to draw, create and describe their own patterns. Use them for borders or greeting cards or on material.

MEASURING things

68. Use a wall measuring chart to measure the height of people in your family.
69. Cut a piece of string for your child, any length will do. Use the string to measure the objects in your house to find out what is longer or shorter than your 'string measuring tape'. Ask your child to identify anything that is the same length.
70. Explore other ways of measuring using a cup, jug, teaspoon, icy pole sticks, foot prints or hand lengths.
71. Build a tower of blocks that is taller than a favourite toy. Ask your child to count the total blocks to measure the height of the tower.

GO on a number hunt

72. With your child find numbers around you, for example house numbers, calendars.
73. Look at and say the numbers on car number plates, signs, calendars, newspapers, shopping catalogues, speed signs, house numbers.
74. Use different numbers as the starting point for practising counting, for example start counting from 6 or 10. Ask your child to count forwards and backwards. Ask what number comes before or what number comes after.
75. Identify the numbers on a calculator. Use an online talking calculator at **http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/games/calculator/calculator.swf**

TURNING maths into a story

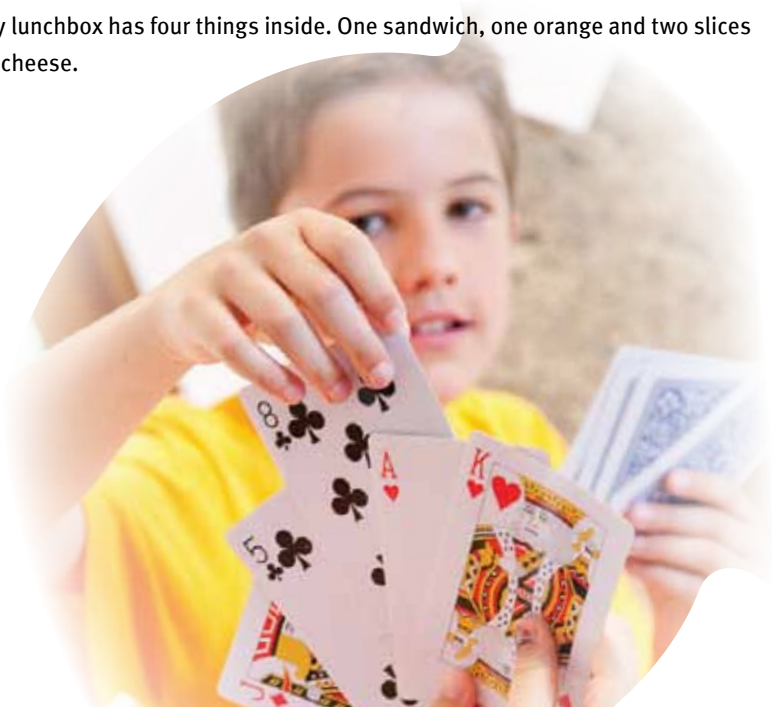
By presenting mathematics as a story children can make links to their everyday life. Begin by reading books to your child that include numbers and counting.

Turn everyday events or objects into a maths story:

76. Count the fruit in the fruit bowl.
77. Cut fruit into six pieces.
78. Count the pieces of toast you cooked at breakfast.
79. Add the total of cutlery at the table.
80. Count the number of people travelling in the car or the bus.

Encourage your child to draw and talk about the number of things in the pictures they have drawn. Write down your child's ideas as a story. Here are some examples:

81. There are five pieces of fruit in our bowl. Three are apples and two are bananas.
82. My lunchbox has four things inside. One sandwich, one orange and two slices of cheese.



MOVING with maths

These ideas use movement of the body, hearing sounds, using eyes and feeling with hands to experience counting.

83. How many throws can we do without dropping the ball?

84. How many jumps does it take to get to...?

85. How many times can you tap the balloon before it touches the ground?

86. How long does it take you to skip to...?

USING playing cards

87. Play matching number games with playing cards.
88. Put cards in order from largest to smallest by counting the shapes (hearts, spades) or using the numbers on the cards.

ASKING questions to investigate

Ask your child questions to encourage them to investigate maths:

89. What shapes can you see?
90. How could we measure the...?
91. How will we find half?
92. What is the best way to share...?

HAVE you tried these counting ideas at home?

93. Count the food items as they are placed in the trolley or unpacked at home.
94. Count each toss of the ball as you play a game.
95. Count the steps to the letterbox, front door, clothes line.
96. Collect and count objects such as toys, shells, and flowers from the garden.
97. Count days on a calendar. Count days down to a special event.
98. Read books that involve counting.

SPOTLIGHT on counting

Counting is one of the first experiences of maths for young children.

Learning the counting words often begins with a favourite song or rhyme and the repetition of the number names.

Listen for the counting sequence in these songs and rhymes:

- Five Little Ducks
- Ten in the Bed
- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Once I Caught a Fish Alive
- Ten Green Bottles
- Five Little Monkeys
- 1, 2, Buckle My Shoe

As children move on to counting a collection of objects they begin to link each object with one number name. In the beginning, encourage your child to touch each object as they say the matching number's name.

Children will begin by counting all objects in a group, for example, fingers and toes, the buttons on their clothes, steps to the house or their toys.

When beginning to count a group of objects, children may arrange the objects in an order to help them. Later they will be able to start counting at any object to find the total.

Some children will need to repeat the count of the objects if the arrangement has been changed, such as the blocks were in a row and now they are in a group. This can be a good way to explore the idea that the last number counted says how many there are in the group.