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Ideas to use at home

Helping your child with numeracy

**national literacy
and numeracy week**

Celebrating literacy and numeracy

Helping your child with counting

Numeracy involves using mathematics efficiently in our day-to-day lives. Every day we use number, measurement and space. Each time we shop or go to the bank we use numbers. Our understanding of space is used to pack a lunchbox or to park a car. We need to understand how to measure things when we sew, cook, build, tell the time or listen to a weather report.

One of the earliest skills children have to develop is counting. To “count” we need to match the number words with the correct number of “things”, then we need to remember the numbers in order.



What can you do at home?

- Ask your child to count the number of plates, cups and pieces of cutlery used to set the table.
- Count with your child the number of buttons as you do up a shirt or blouse.
- Encourage your child to count the number of pegs you use to hang out the washing.
- Count the number of eggs in a carton, and again after you remove some.
- Count the number of steps it takes to go from the front door to the footpath.
- Play Dominoes, card games and board games involving one or two dice. This will help your child to recognise number patterns.
- Play a game of Snakes and Ladders. Use two dice and encourage your child to add the two numbers rolled.
- Use dice that have numbers instead of dots to help your child read and recognise numbers.

Helping your child with measurement

Children need to observe how measurement is used in practical situations. First, they need to talk about the things that we can measure and the things that we can use to measure them. Then they will need to learn about the units we use for measuring, such as litres, kilograms and metres.

What can you do at home?

- Give your child different sized plastic cups and a larger container to play with in the bath or shower. Encourage your child to guess how many of each cup it will take to fill the container.



- Talk about how many cups of each ingredient are used in a recipe when you are cooking together.
- Put sand in a large plastic tub so children can fill containers with sand. Sieves, colanders, plastic spoons, old clean margarine tubs, plastic bottles and funnels are useful for playing with sand.
- Have children weigh themselves. Weigh other family members and family pets.
- Use modelling dough to roll out two "snakes" of different length. Talk about one snake being "shorter" and the other "longer".
- Record your child's growth on a height chart.
- Talk about events in terms of time. For example, "It's going to take about three minutes to cook this, so you might have time to butter some bread."
- Mark special events on a calendar and talk about how many days until the event and which day of the week the event will be on.
- Watch the weather report together and talk about the forecasted temperatures for the following day. Ask your child what they might need to wear or have with them.



Helping your child with space

Mathematics is also about ideas relating to shapes, objects and their position. Children need to be able to describe shapes and objects and their position.

What can you do at home?

- Talk about the position of an object when putting it back on a shelf. "The teddy is next to the car." "Let's put the doll on top of this box."
- Look for objects inside or outside that



- are shaped like a circle, triangle, square or rectangle. Look for different sized shapes and shapes in different positions.
- Fold paper to make a hat, boat or aeroplane. Talk about the shapes you are making.
- Make your own jigsaw from a picture in a magazine.
- Use boxes and containers of different sizes to play "stacking" games.
- Talk about the route you are taking when walking to school or to the park.
- Make biscuits using cookie cutters or make pretend biscuits from modelling dough. Talk about the shape of each biscuit.
- Involve your child in craft activities such as making your own gift wrapping by printing shapes onto paper using corks, empty cotton reels or sponges.