

Suggested activities for helping nursery children to learn maths at home.



About the targets

These targets show some of the things your child should be able to do by the end of the Nursery year.

Some targets are harder than they seem, e.g. children who can count up to 10 may still have trouble saying which number comes after 5. They may have to start at 1 and count from there.

Fun activities to do at home

Counting and putting numbers in order

Use old magazines, comics or greetings cards. Cut out pictures of animals, or anything else your child is interested in. Label the animals 1 to 5.



- ◆ Shuffle the animals. Put them in order from 1 to 5.
- ◆ Remove one animal. Ask your child which number is missing. Repeat with other numbers and more than one missing number.
- ◆ Ask your child to say what number comes before or after a number you choose.

When your child can do this, repeat with numbers 1 to 10.

Build a tower

For this game you need a dice and some building blocks or lego bricks.

- ◆ Take turns.
- ◆ Roll the dice.
- ◆ Collect the number of bricks to build your own tower.
- ◆ The first to 10 wins!

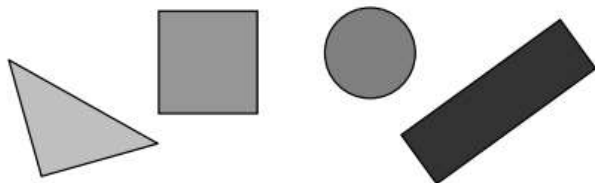
For a change, start with 10 blocks or bricks each. Take away the number on the dice. First to exactly zero wins.

Roll a shape

Cut out 12 shapes.

Make 3 triangles, 3 squares, 3 rectangles and 3 circles.

- ◆ Take turns to roll a dice and collect a shape that has that number of sides, e.g. roll a 4, collect a square.
- ◆ The first to have four different shapes wins.
- ◆ If you can name each shape you go first next time!



One more, one less

For this game you need a dice, a coin and some building blocks or Lego bricks.

- ◆ Take turns to roll the dice.
- ◆ Build a tower with that number of blocks or bricks.
- ◆ Then toss the coin. Heads means take one brick off. Tails means add one on.
- ◆ If you can guess how many bricks there will be after this, you keep them!
- ◆ The first to collect 20 bricks or more wins!

Counting

Practise counting. Start at 5, and count on from there to 11.

Start at 9, count back from there to zero.

Choose a different starting number each time.

Cupboard maths

Ask your child to help you sort a food cupboard out, putting **heavier** items on the lower shelf and **lighter** items on an upper shelf.



Rhymes

Teach your child any number rhymes or songs that you know, particularly ones that involve holding up a number of fingers, like *Five little speckled frogs*. Practise them regularly, with actions. You can get counting songs on audio tape for a very reasonable price.

Dicey counting

Take turns to roll a dice and count back to zero from the number thrown. For example:



Four, three, two, one, zero!

Collections

You need something to collect, e.g. sticky shapes, dried beans.

- ◆ In turn, one player claps 1, 2, 3, or 4 times while the other player closes his eyes and listens.
- ◆ How many claps did you hear? Take that number of shapes.
- ◆ The first to make a pattern with 12 sticky shapes wins.

Spot the difference

Draw a row of six big coloured spots.



- ◆ In turn, one player closes his or her eyes.
- ◆ The other player hides some of the spots with a sheet of paper.
- ◆ The first player looks and says how many spots are hidden.
- ◆ Try with other numbers of spots, e.g. five or seven.

Recognising numbers

Choose a number for the week, e.g. 2.

Encourage your child to look out for this number all the time.

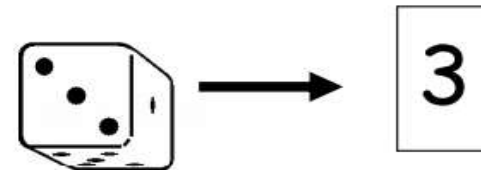
- ◆ Can your child see the number 2 anywhere?
 - at home**
 - in the kitchen
 - on pages in a book
 - in the street**
 - on doors
 - on car number plates
 - on buses
 - while out shopping**
 - on the shop till
 - on shelves
 - in shop windows
- ◆ Find two apples, toys, spoons, straws, sweets, etc.
- ◆ Make patterns, such as two knives, two forks, two spoons, two knives, two forks, two spoons...
- ◆ Practise writing the number 2.

Choose a different number each week

Dice game

Use a 'dotted' dice and write the numbers 1 to 6 on a sheet of paper (or use the numbered animals).

- ◆ Throw the dice. Can your child guess how many dots there are? Check by counting.
- ◆ Ask your child which number on the paper matches the dots on the dice.



Maths is everywhere

Maths is about everyday life. We can't do things like shopping, cooking, telling the time, fitting flat pack furniture together, etc. without using our mathematical skills and knowledge.

Maths is everywhere and it doesn't just happen at school.

There are opportunities for children's maths development everywhere

- In the home
- In the garden
- At the shops
- On the way to school
- At the park



Talk about too big/
too small



Talk about shapes, pattern and colour

Clothes

Point out numerals



Sort pairs
of socks,
shoes and
gloves



Count buttons on coats
and cardigans





Sort mugs, plates,
cutlery when
washing up

Water



Talk about full/
empty and more/
less.

Use old plastic
bottles, sieves,
bowls etc. in the
bath



Maths is fun

We can develop a positive attitude to maths by
making it fun to:

- Count the steps we go up or down
- Look at the house numbers or bus
numbers whilst out walking
- Set the table-how many cups etc. do we
need?
- Match pairs of socks
- Brush long or short hair
- Look at how tall the flowers grow
- Sing number nursery rhymes

The most important thing to remember is that
it should be FUN!



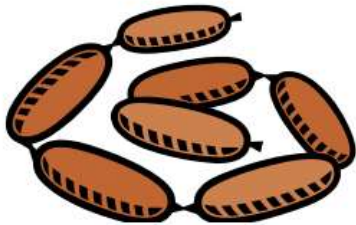
1 2 3 4 5 once
I caught a fish
alive....

3 little monkeys jumping
on the bed....



Songs

Nursery rhymes and songs introduce lots of
maths especially counting.

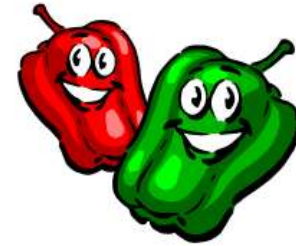


7 fat sausages sizzling in the pan.....



Do we need a whole
one or half?

Are these the same or
different?



Shopping

What number is on the bus?



Is your bag heavier or
lighter than mine?

Let your child hand over the
money





Let your child help with the gardening.

How many seeds/bulbs for this hole?

Gardening

Talk about “too long” or “too tall” when cutting bushes back.



Is this hole big enough for this plant?



Talk about shapes and patterns of everyday objects

Can you see rectangles in the wall?



Pattern and shape in the environment



Can you see diamonds in the fence?

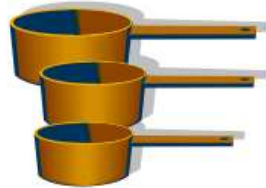
Point out the shapes of road signs





Let your child help with baking/cooking.

What size pan do we need?



Kitchen



How many more pieces of cake do we need?

What shape is the cake?



1 plate, 1 knife and fork and spoon for 1 person

Talk about the sequence of events, what happens next?

Is this the beginning, middle or the end?



Books



Where is the front or back of the book?