

Early Numeracy Skills

Children learn by watching and experiencing numeracy in everyday play and activities. Help them by getting them to count their fingers and toys, recognise numbers and shapes on objects like clocks and phones or in books.

Count stairs as you go up, cars on the street, or count toys with your child as you pack them away.

When out and about, Point out things like house numbers, or numbers on buses

Use maths concepts to describe what you and your child are seeing and doing together.

"Look at the fast cars!"

"This bag is heavy!"

Encourage your child to describe or compare shapes of leaves, colours of flowers or sizes of birds.

When you're preparing food, talk about what you're doing.

"I'm cutting this orange in half"

"Let's share these grapes – one for me and one for you."



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Use mathematical language when describing objects and positions:

- **BIG / SMALL**
- **SAME / DIFFERENT**
- **OVER/UNDER**
- **NEAR/FAR**

Involve your child in cooking. Your child can help **stir**, **pour**, **fill** and **mix**.

This helps your child become familiar with concepts like counting, measuring, adding and estimating.



Give them choices, by letting them decide

“How many slices of fruit would you like?”

“Would you like milk or juice?”

Encourage them to count them out along with you

Measure your child’s height and keep a record by marking it on a height chart or on the wall.

Explain what you are doing, and point out the difference:

“Look how much you have grown!”

Ideas for Play

- ⇒ Go for a **nature walk** and let your child gather a mix of leaves, sticks, pebbles and other natural items. Your child can **sort them into groups** based on size, colour, shape or what they do.
- ⇒ Sing songs and read books that have numbers in them that **repeat, rhyme** and have **rhythm**. This will help your child understand patterns. Play or sing music at different speeds. Your child can dance, jump or shake musical instruments to slow or fast songs. Sing nursery rhymes slowly and then speed up.
- ⇒ Play **outside games** like 'I spy', hopscotch, skittles and 'What's the time Mr Wolf'.
- ⇒ Race toy cars and talk about which came **first, second** or **third**. Help your child to arrange her favourite toys in order from shortest to tallest.
- ⇒ Play **simple board games**, card games and puzzles with shapes and numbers like snap or matching pairs like dominoes.

These kinds of games give pre-schoolers a chance to learn about taking turns, following the rules, counting and playing fair. Although turn-taking can be a challenge for children, with practice they can learn to enjoy this type of play.

- ⇒ **Sorting games** activities like sorting blocks, buttons or pegs help to build basic maths and numeracy skills.

