



First steps

One of the first things a child recognises is the idea that one object can be linked to another. So talk about numbers in everyday contexts: 'Here is one apple for mummy and one for Sam.' Count the stairs as you go up and down.



Out and about

Following on is number recognition. When you are out and about encourage your child to recognise numbers on doors, car number plates, house numbers, prices, clocks, weights and phone numbers.



Fun and games

Play games and sports that involve numbers and counting. Anything with dice is good, as well as simple card games and bingo. Construction games are helpful in developing an understanding of spaces, objects and how they fit together. Add number apparatus to your child's toy collection: counters, a purse full of change, dice, dominoes, a tape measure, ruler, pack of cards, timer, different shaped packages. There are lots of songs and rhymes that involve counting and numbers. Those with actions are especially fun to sing, so altogether now for '10 Green Bottles'!



At the shops

Get your child to help with the shopping. Count items as they go into the trolley and look at the size of various packages: decide which container is bigger or smaller, taller or shorter, holds more or less. Set up a play shop at home, using old packaging as 'stock' and write the prices on sticky labels. Later on, this will give opportunities for adding up and subtracting to calculate change.



In the bath

Bath-time is great for simple shape and volume activities - does the beaker hold more water the plastic cup? Show your child how to use a simple thermometer to take the temperature of the water.



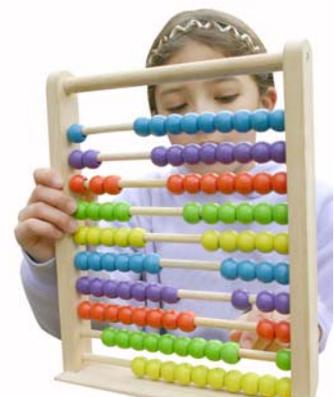
Teatime

Cooking is good to help your child get to know simple weights and measures. An old-fashioned set of balance scales is ideal. Count out spoonfuls of ingredients. Let your child help you set the timer and count down to teatime! Bear in mind that your child will be learning the metric system at school, so try to measure amounts in grams and kilograms.



Measuring up

Measure your child's height and show him/her where their height is on a chart. Provide them with a simple tape measure and get them to measure the length or height of objects in the home. As with weights and measures, try to use metres and centimetres when measuring things with your child.





It's all in the mind!

A key part of every numeracy session in school is mental maths. Children have to get used to solving problems in their heads, rather than resorting to a calculator. (Although being able to use a calculator is important too!) Helping them to learn their times table facts and quickly to recall number facts is a great for mental manipulations.



Fun and games

Play sports and games that involve scoring, timing, counting and measuring e.g. snooker, darts, snakes and ladders, cribbage, dominoes, chess, draughts, Stratego, Pathfinder etc. Construction games are excellent for developing an understanding of spaces, objects and how they fit together). Capitalise on hobbies. If your child is car-mad, talk about relative engine sizes, fuel economy, speed and performance. If she has a favourite pop group, get her to compile a list of statistics such as the number of weeks each single is in the charts.



At the shops

Get your child to help with the shopping. Weigh fruit and vegetables and estimate their cost; estimate total cost of shopping using rounding; discuss the shapes of packaging; estimate and examine weights and capacity; read tables and charts. Talk about pocket money with your child. Help her to add it up week by week and work out how much she will have after a certain amount of time.



It's about time

Think about time. Look at clocks, both digital and analogue. Estimate how long a certain activity will take to do and see if you are right! Work out how long it is until the next mealtime. Play games: how long is a minute, starting from now? Measure your child's height and show them where the height is on a chart. Think about calendars and dates too. Make a timeline that includes the birthdays of each member of the family and work out how far apart each one is. Use different units: months, weeks and days, even hours, minutes and seconds. Add other important events, such as a family holiday, and encourage your child to count down to the big day.



Ready steady cook

Cooking is great for helping your child get to know simple weights and measures. An old-fashioned set of balance scales is ideal. Count out spoonfuls of ingredients. Let your child help you set the timer and count down to teatime! Later on, this is a good way to introduce the idea of ratios and proportions, too. Bear in mind that your child will be learning the metric system at school, so try to measure amounts in grams and kilograms.

