

Some online websites that your children can access at home to help with their maths are

-Top Marks

-Hit the button

-Power of 10

-ICT Games

-Bitesize

-Math Playground

Mathematics can either be fun or daunting for young children. But by encouraging your child to build important early numeracy skills in a relaxed, interesting and interactive way, you are giving them the best possible chance at succeeding in, and learning to love, mathematics!

1. Play dough shapes. Ask your child to look at different 2D and 3D shapes and form them using play dough. You can also use shape cutters to help guide them. This activity gives your child a hands-on opportunity to learn, observe and manipulate different shapes.

2. Count and sort a basket of toys. Sorting and classifying objects help children understand the nature of mathematics. Gather a basket or box of toys and sit down with your child to count them. Sort them based on size, colour or theme. This is also a great way to encourage them to put away their toys!

3. Experiment with volumes during bath time. Collect differently sized jars, cups and containers and use them during bath time to teach your child about 'full' and 'empty' and compare capacities. Talk about what's happening as you play. For example, "My cup is full, no more water can fit in my cup", or "Let's pour water from my small cup to your big cup and see if it becomes full".

4. Counting in the kitchen. Cooking together is a great way to learn about fractions and measurements in the kitchen. Show your child different measuring tools and talk about the concept of fractions, such as explaining how two $\frac{1}{2}$ cups make one whole cup.

5. Don't drop the ball. Take your mathematics lesson outside by counting the number of times you and your child can throw a ball to each other without dropping it. You can also ask another child to keep a tally.

6. Mathematics in nature. Taking a walk gives your child many opportunities to build early numeracy skills. Compare the sizes of different rocks, assess how many birds you spot, note similarities and differences between different leaves, and carry a notebook to put the things you see into categories.

7. Dry macaroni patterns. Patterns help children learn sequencing and to make predictions, which leads to stronger numeracy skills. Have fun with patterns by letting your child arrange dry macaroni into different patterns or designs. You can also use beads or different types of cereal.

8. Building block towers. Building and identifying sequences help your child develop a sense of order, logic, and reason. Building block towers is a fun way to introduce your child to sequencing, by following a step-by-step method with a final goal in mind.

9. Number safari. In the car, have your child look for numbers in street and shop signs, and on licence plates. See if they can find all numbers up to ten and encourage them to call out the numbers as they find them.

10. Connect the dots. Connect the dots is a fun way to teach your child about number sequencing.

Doing the daily shopping

Reading food labels, comparing brands and prices, discussing nutrition information, budgeting and finding the best deals are all reasons to get your child involved with the weekly shopping routine. It is also likely to help them understand the value of money a little better than they currently do, something which will be of particular use in later life.

Cooking and baking

Cooking and baking are brilliant exercises to improve both their maths and literacy skills. Your children can read the instructions to you or the other way around, if you prefer. By following the instructions they will become familiar with quantities, fractions, temperatures and cooking times, among other things. They are also likely to feel a sense of satisfaction about being able to create food that the whole family can enjoy.

Understanding and paying bills

When the next monthly bills arrive, why not show your child how much things cost, explain to them about utility companies and get them involved with the household finances and budget. Aside from improving their maths skills, they will also begin to understand basic rules such as why it is important to turn the lights off when leaving a room.

Feeding pets

The number of times a pet should be fed each day will depend on the type and breed of animal. The volume of food may also vary depending on their weight. You could build both measuring skills and a sense of independence in your child by involving them in this task.

Keeping track of time

A schedule is important for any household to run smoothly and giving your child some of the responsibility for ensuring breakfast is eaten on time, coats are on before it is time to leave the house, stories are read in advance of bed time and baths are completed within the time available, will give your child extra motivation to understand and be aware of the time of day and the length of activities.

Sharing items equally between family members

There are many household tasks that require the equal sharing of items, such as placing cutlery on the dinner table, dividing pieces of fruit for desert, pairing socks and distributing pocket money. Why not have a helper give you a hand with these tasks?

Putting clothes and toys away

This may be a tedious task when done on your own, but perhaps you could involve the children in putting clothes and toys away with a game to quickly find a container the right shape and size for each item. They may need to count the puzzle pieces to ensure each piece is safely returned to the box, put the books in height order or find a shoe box big enough for the largest feet in the household. Your child could also time how long it takes to clear up the room and aim to beat that time each day, to add some healthy competition to the task!