

How to support your child with maths at home

Aspirations and opportunities

Maths really is the key to open countless career opportunities in later life, not to mention it also provides vital life skills for surviving and functioning in society.

Here is a link to a BBC Bitesize page where jobs for maths are listed. There might be some there that you hadn't ever thought of before! From engineers to chefs, gaming to fantasy football!

[Jobs that use Maths - BBC Bitesize](#)

Practical activities you can do to help your children at home

Number

You can always be counting! Forwards, backwards and from any given number. But also see if your children can recognise how many there are of an object without counting – this is called subitising.

[What is subitising and WHY is it so important in young children's maths? - YouTube](#)

Time

Telling the time is an important skill in everyday life, but we all know how tricky it is to learn despite the number of devices we have in our homes that keep us punctual.

Before your child will be able to tell the time on a clock, they will need to grasp how time relates to their own experiences. You can start to increase their awareness of time from a young age by doing some simple activities and games.

1. Talk time

Draw attention to time by mentioning the time at different points in the day. For example, you could say, 'it's 5 o'clock – time for tea,' or 'it's 7 o'clock – time for a bath.'

2. Clocks at home

Ovens, phones, microwaves, television and computers all tell the time, but the best way of learning how to tell the time and, importantly, understanding how time passes is by using analogue clocks. With little ones, start with analogue clocks rather than digital clocks. This is what they will be doing in school. Watch the hands move from seconds to minutes and then to hours, focusing on telling time to the hour and half hour.

It's very important that children can see clocks around the home, so put a clock in your child's bedroom. Ideally it should have a clear hour hand and minute hand as this will help them to understand that the short hand shows the hour and the long hand shows the minutes.

3. Five, sixty and 24 – Know the numbers of time

Although multiples of 10, 100 and 1000 are key numbers when measuring, time is focused on 60. Make sure your child is confident with numbers and counting from 1–60 as this will make telling the time easier.

Practising the five times table will also be a big help.

4. Get out and about

When you're out and about with your child, look for analogue clocks and digital clocks. Practise reading times and converting them to 12- or 24-hour times. You could also use timetables to solve problems – for example, finding when the next bus will arrive or how long a train journey will take.

5. Make time for fun

There are lots of opportunities to have fun when learning to tell the time. Have a go at some enjoyable activities that include measuring time, for example:

- use a timer for baking
- play a board game with a sand timer
- use a stopwatch to time a race or challenge

Measures

Here are some handy, practical ways to help your child's learning in measures.

1. Measure everything

There are lots of opportunities to practise measuring at home. Try to measure practically wherever possible. Discuss and identify standard units (like cm, m, kg, g, l, ml) on food packaging, toiletries, or clothes labels.

You could also try using non-standard measures. For example, how many paces long is the kitchen? How many paperclips wide is the book?

2. Bake or cook together

Help your child to measure ingredients when you are cooking. Identify the capacity/volume or mass/weight of ingredients, either using scales or less formal methods such as cups.

3. Get outside

Getting outside allows children to apply their new understanding to everyday life. When going for a walk, measure the distance you have walked, calculate the perimeter of your local park to estimate the area. Maths is everywhere – go and explore.

4. Guess work

When children have grasped the units of measure, supporting them to make estimates is another important skill.

You could estimate how many sweets are in a jar, how many steps to the end of the road, minutes to complete a task or how high are the plants in the garden. This will allow the children to visualise the units and apply them in real life.

Money

If you are looking for a simple money game for your child, the following is a good one to start with:

Step 1: Gather lots of coins together with your child (1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1, £2)

Step 2: Choose an amount of money you are going to make using all of the denominations of coins available (we recommend £2 to keep the number of coins needed to a minimum)

Step 3: Show (or let your child work out) how many of each coin is needed to make the desired amount. E.g you will need 200 1p coins to make £2, two £1 coins to make £2 etc.

Step 4: Let your child visualise the values of the coins. To reinforce the concept, ask them to try building their own piles.

Go shopping together! Show your child the cost of different items. When at the shop, involve them in decisions and explain your choices. Make sure to bring cash. Let them count out the money and hand it over to the cashier so they begin to think about the process of spending. Ask them to check the change after so they get used to the mental calculations required.

All of this should help them begin to realise that whilst **money = items** when in a shop, different amounts of money means you can buy different amounts of items.

Great books to read involving maths

