

Parent Guide



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What is this resource and how do I use it?

Part of a detailed series of resources on 'Supporting Your Child's Learning in Reception', this parent guide gives you an overview of the early maths early learning goals, information on how your child may be taught mathematics at school and practical, fun ideas for how you can support them with their early maths skills at home.

What is the focus of this resource?

EYFS Framework

Supporting Your Child

Reception

Mathematics

Further Ideas and Suggestions

Counting is a crucial skill for children in reception to develop. Luckily, opportunities to practise it are easily woven into everyday activities. Try out our learning to count ideas for **at home** and when **out and about** to build your child's confidence and understanding of numbers.

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Mathematics

What is mathematics?

In reception, there is a strong focus on children understanding numbers and numerical patterns. The idea is that children really understand amounts, how to use numbers and the patterns within numbers, rather than superficially being able to count to 50 but not understanding that five stones in a row is the same amount as five stones in a stack.

While there are no early learning goals relating to shape, space and measures, these are also part of mathematics and your child will learn about these in school.

In early years, mathematics is one of the specific areas of learning and there are two aspects within it:

Number

Numerical Patterns

The following pages contain more information on each early learning goal and how you can support your child to meet this end of year expectation at home. Visit these areas on the Parents Hub for amazing resources to help you make learning at home fun!

Number

Shape

Measure

How will my child be taught mathematics in school?

Every school is different so it's best to talk to your child's teacher or look on their website for more information. Your child may access mathematical resources throughout the day in their play. Pebbles, sticks, pens, shoes, fingers - pretty much anything can be used to support counting! Your child may have whole class maths sessions in school or do small group work with an adult. They should also be able to access maths outdoors and throughout their play. For example, they may be able to use scales in the home corner, showing their understanding of why we weigh things and playing with the language around weight. They will probably play lots of games, including interactive games, and sing songs with numbers such as 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' and 'Ten Green Bottles'.

Please remember, the early learning goals are the expectation for the end of reception. Your child will be working towards these throughout the year and gradually building on their skills. They don't have to be able to do everything all at once!

How can I support my child at home?

- Count, count, count! Rote counting is good to begin with but, as your child goes into reception, encourage them to count objects as much as you can. They could count toys, houses, cutlery, groceries - anything!
- Give counting and numbers meaning. Say there are five of you in the family, can your child get five spoons out for you all at dinner time?
- Play games with dice. It's amazing how quickly some children can begin to subitise the numbers on a dice when they are playing games! Board games are a popular choice, as are games such as this [Robot Building Dice Game](#).
- Work on number recognition through both everyday occurrences (numbers on doors or buses, for example) and games such as this [Balloon Toss Number and Letter Recognition Outdoor Learning Activity](#).
- Begin to practise addition and subtraction within five, then ten. You could hide toys and ask your child how many are missing.
- Sing songs and rhymes to support your child in developing automatic recall. Try to model using your fingers to show amounts as you sing and encourage your child to do the same. The more you do this, the more automatic the skills should become.
- Explore doubling with your child in a playful and engaging way. For example, imagine your child's face if you 'magically' doubled the treats they have on a plate!
- Investigating what doubling means is crucial to do before your child can begin to learn doubles facts. Try some of these [doubling home learning challenges](#).
- Provide some **five** or **ten frames** for your child to use in their play at home. They might add pebbles, small world toys or blocks to practise their counting and number skills.

Early Learning Goal

Children at the expected level of development will:

- have a deep understanding of numbers to 10, including the composition of each number.
- subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5.
- automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

Numerical Patterns

Early Learning Goal

Children at the expected level of development will:

- verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system.
- compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity.
- explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

How can I support my child at home?

- Estimate how many objects there are and model counting to check, e.g. 'I think there are six buttons left. Should we count to see?'
- Play card games such as 'Snap' with cards where some have numerals and some have dot arrangements. These **cards** are super versatile!
- Explore recording scores in different ways (tallies, dots, numerals) when you play games.
- Count to 20 and beyond, letting your child listen. Children are often intrigued by such 'big' numbers! You might find they start to join in rote counting; if this happens, pause occasionally to let them fill in the gap if they can.
- Display a **100 square** in your child's bedroom or playroom. Sometimes, this is all the invitation they need to begin to explore numerical patterns.
- Play with different ways of making up quantities, e.g. arranging eight toys in two lines of four or a line of six and a line of two.
- Share out a packet of sweets between you and your child. Model giving you one each at a time - at the end, do you have the same amount? Talk about why this is, introducing the idea of odd and even numbers.
- Be 'unfair' with your sharing out at times! Children are usually very quick to pick up on this and it's a great way to compare amounts and talk about odd and even numbers and sharing.
- Keep a maths activity booklet like this **winter-themed one** in your bag at all times. They are perfect for keeping your little one busy and supporting their mathematical development at the same time.
- Let your child explore and play with numbers, patterns and quantities. Maybe this means asking them to make enough playdough pies for everyone in the family, then letting them explain that there's not enough playdough and they can only make two. Or letting them count out all the carrots on their plate, even if it means it takes them a long time to eat their dinner!
- Many children love numbers and will really appreciate resources like these **number formation cards** to use in their play. They might use them as signs, money or simply practise forming and ordering numbers or counting with them.

Shape, Space and Measures

Although there's no longer any early learning goals related to shape, space and measures, your child will still be learning about them at school. The Statutory Framework for the EYFS states:

'In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.'

How can I support my child at home?

- Play with a range of jigsaw puzzles.
- Build with different blocks and objects. Discuss the features of them, such as, 'I need a flat one on the bottom of my tower so it doesn't roll away'.
- Go on a shape hunt around your house or local area.
- Encourage your child to spot and describe patterns, for example in the coloured stripes on their top. They can also play with making patterns using objects or paints. These **Inspire My Play: Repeating Pattern Inserts** are great for exploring and making different patterns.
- Comment on and compare different measures in everyday life - 'That stick is longer than this one,' 'Your bowl is bigger than mine!' or 'Can we make the tower even taller?'
- Begin to attach measurements to your child's play, e.g. 'My tower is four bricks tall. How many bricks tall is your tower?'
- Play! Reception children should be introduced to games like this **Shapes Go Fish! Card Game** or this **Digger Spin-a-Shape Game** to support their PSED skills, too.
- You may be engaging your child in pattern recognition without even realising it! Do you point out that when the sun goes down, the moon comes up. Then when the moon disappears, the sun reappears? This is a natural pattern. You can engage your child in learning about patterns through everyday routines, songs and rhyming stories too.
- Ask your child to put things away in certain places, using prepositions such as 'under', 'on top of' or 'next to'. Encourage them to use prepositions to describe where things are too, gradually moving them away from pointing and saying, 'there' (which many reception children do!). You could do this with illustrations in books or with real objects.
- Begin to talk about time and let your child experiment with language around days of the week and such. They may mix up things like tomorrow and yesterday - don't worry! Young children have a very different sense of time to adults but they will get there.

Try to make learning maths an adventure, exploring numbers and patterns rather than just learning off by heart. Your child should feel confident to play with mathematical language and ideas - and make mistakes, too!

Disclaimer: We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.