**Maths at Home**



**St Bede’s Catholic Primary School**

Mathematics matters. Developing an understanding of mathematical concepts when we are young is essential, and children’s early mathematical understanding is strongly associated with their later school achievement.

***So what can I do at home?***

The first thing you can do is start with a **positive mindset**. It’s important to be positive about maths. Try not to say things like "I can't do maths" or "I hated maths at school" – your child may start to think like that themselves.

Try and use positive language around your child such as “don’t worry, it’s okay to make mistakes, we all do”, also be as patient as possible with them when they’re doing their homework.

**Try asking rather than telling**. When your child finds something difficult, it can be really tempting to tell them the answer. However in the long run, it's much more helpful to discuss a problem and help them to work out the answer for themselves.  
  
You can encourage your child by praising them for working hard and not giving up. The most important message you can give your child is that **making mistakes is a natural part of learning.**

Positivity can go a long way to improving their attitude towards maths!  In doing so, **praise your child for effort**; this shows them that by working hard, they can always improve.

**Asking your child questions** as you work together can really help them too.

Here are some examples:

* What strategy are you going to use?
* How do you know that?
* Do you notice anything interesting?
* Are there any patterns?

**Use manipulatives to support learning**. For example, building bricks could be used to model simple addition and multiplication, or toys used to make comparisons of size or quantity. Measuring items, scales, construction materials, puzzles, sorting and pattern materials are also great sources for discussion! You can use almost anything to support with counting – pasta, marbles, cars – anything!

**Try and use maths talk every day**. Use every opportunity to point out the maths in everyday life.   Talking about maths is really important for your child’s mathematical development.   Whenever you have the opportunity, try to include maths talk in their lives. This is easily done when they are playing with physical objects as you can reinforce their counting skills. For example, how many pennies are you holding? Or what shape is that object? When counting, reinforce the last number they counted as this can help their mathematical development further, for example “one, two three...three cars.” When you are doing so, try to use the **correct mathematical language**; add, take away, find the difference, more, less, fewer etc

When working with younger children at home, it is important not to see mathematics as a separate or standalone activity but rather as something which can be **incorporated into everyday activities, games, stories, and conversations**. There are lots of ways that learning can be incorporated into children’s everyday life.

Here are a few examples:

* Practise counting at every opportunity! Socks, cars, conkers, sheep in a field, pictures in stories, how many knives, forks, buttons. How many cars/trains/have you got in your toy box? How many wheels are there altogether?
* Count in a variety of ways! As age-appropriate, move from counting by 1’s to counting by 2’s, 10’s, 5’s Count forward and backwards.
* Don’t just count objects.... What about claps, jumps, hops, skips, how many times a dog barks, the microwave beeps etc
* Count out loud with your child saying the names of numbers clearly, stressing TEEN numbers (especially 13 and 15!)
* Look for numbers everywhere. Show and name numbers to your child at all opportunities, including TV remotes and channels, telephones, car number plates, clocks, page numbers, money (coins and notes). Make a game like how many times can we see the number 3 today? When looking at house numbers discuss odd and even
* Sing songs or rhymes with numbers in them; 10 In The Bed, 5 Little Ducks, 10 Fat Sausages, 5 cheeky monkeys etc.
* Ask questions. Eg, How many do you think there are? (estimation) How many are there altogether? What about if one (of the birds/sheep/dogs) flew/ran away? What if another joined?
* Encourage measurement in the home! Let your child make meaningful and helpful measurements. Use both standard measurement (e.g., centimetre, metre, etc.) and non-standard (e.g., child’s footsteps, blocks or cubes)
* Create a family maths night! Designate a night as Family Night. Play board games and other games that use number cubes (dice), card games, dominos, cards or board games such as snakes and ladders
* Set a maths reading time. Read stories with numbers in them, e.g. The Very Hungry Caterpillar – count with your child.  Set aside time every week to read a maths story rather than a traditional story. Theschoolrun.com have a section called best maths storybooks for children. Ask questions about counting, comparing, finding totals and differences, looking at patterns or shapes, etc. You can practise using position words when looking at picture books, asking questions like ‘What is *behind* the boy?’ and ‘What can you see *under* the table?’. This can help young children to think about space, shapes, and position. You could also try counting and looking for numbers in your child’s favourite story books. For example, ‘How many biscuits can we see?’ or ‘How many times did the dog woof?’
* Do a shape hunt! Look for shapes in your home, estate, playground, etc. (Encourage children to identify shapes around them; do a circle spotting hunt, square spotting etc.
* Dot to dot puzzle books are good for practising number order – ask them to do it in reverse sometimes so they get used to counting forwards and  backwards.
* Measuring and weighing – measuring plants, ordering food items by how heavy they feel. Ordering shoes according to size. Order objects  according to weight (which is heavy and light)
* Sharing objects eg There’s 4 apples and 2 of us, how many shall we have each? Playing sports - try passing a ball in the garden and counting how many times you can pass it before it is dropped. Can you beat your score?
* Talk about the weather The weather is a great topic to bring maths into the real world. Your child could try keeping a weather chart. Younger children might want to record each day as sunny, cloudy, rainy, and so on. As the chart grows, you can encourage them to talk about how many sunny days there have been, or how many more sunny days than rainy days we have seen in the last couple of weeks.
* Maths at meal times - meal times provide a wealth of maths opportunities. Getting involved in food preparation, cooking, and serving can help children practise maths skills like counting, measuring. Young children can be encouraged to set the table for the right number of people, asking them to find the correct number of items such as plates, glasses, and cutlery.