

Pointing out maths in the real world



Family Maths
Toolkit

Information for parents & carers

We all use numbers every day, whether we think about it or not. Maths is not just for the classroom.

Spotting maths in the real world helps children understand this. It helps them see why it's useful to learn maths. And it's something you can do to support your child's maths learning outside of school.

There are all sorts of ways to bring number skills into things you already do with your child.

For younger children

There are lots of places to find maths in day-to-day life.

Here are a few you could try.

Around the house

Cooking: try recipes, measure ingredients and set the timer together.

Time: talk about how long it takes to get to school, what time we need to be there, what time we need to leave the house.

Size and shape: use plasticine or building bricks to make different shapes; order them by size.

In the newspaper: look for where numbers are used in news articles, adverts, weather forecasts, job adverts. Talk about how numbers are used in money, percentages, probability, graphs and charts.

Out and about

Number hunt: find as many numbers as you can on signs, in shops, on doors or buses, etc.

Counting: count the things you can see – how many people are in the queue? How many red cars can you spot?

Plan journeys: talk about distance, time and directions.

Estimate: talk about the local area and estimate how many houses are on the street, how many people live in the town, or how far away the nearest town is.

Games

Card games: lots of card games involve numbers. Try playing matching games or snap, or draw cards and aim to get as close to 21 as possible without going 'bust'.

Building blocks: talk about the size and shape of the blocks and make patterns.

I Spy: play the game by spying numbers and shapes.

Board games: try games like Connect 4, Snakes & Ladders, Monopoly or any games that involve throwing dice to move around the board.

Hobbies

Sports: talk about the numbers in your child's favourite sports. How many goals or points are needed to win or to get promoted? Talk about time, distance, shapes on the pitch, etc.

Dance: count the beats in the music and point out the shapes, patterns and symmetry dancing makes.

Television: look out for numbers in popular TV shows. Point out how contestants measure ingredients on baking shows. Add up the scores on dancing shows.

Where else could you look for numbers in everyday life?

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For older children

Beyond school, adults use maths in lots of ways. Talking about this can help older children see the value of learning maths.

Here are a few examples.

Careers

All jobs: everyday maths skills are needed for things like arriving on time, understanding payslips, working with schedules and using budgets.

Healthcare: maths is needed for making drug calculations, understanding patient data and taking readings.

Construction: workers need number skills for taking measurements, understanding scale and proportion, and following plans.

Design (graphics, fashion, interiors, etc): using shapes, recognising patterns, understanding measurements and units, scale and proportion, and following plans are all needed in design work.

University

Study: students on every course will need to use number skills in some way – whether it's making calculations, understanding research and statistics, conducting studies and analysing results, or simply managing time, word counts and mark schemes for assessments.

Budgeting: students living away from home will need to understand their income and outgoings to manage loans and grants, rent, tuition fees and living expenses.

Money and finances

Budgeting: understanding your income and expenses, knowing what you can afford, and making choices about what to do with your money is important for everyone.

Credit and savings: maths skills are useful for understanding interest rates and other terms and conditions on credit cards, loans and saving accounts.

Taxes: self-employed people or people who own businesses need number skills to fill in a tax return, and even employed people need maths to understand the rate of tax they should be paying.

Where do you use maths in your work or daily life? What does your child want to do after they leave school? What number skills will they need for that?