

Supporting Early Maths Skills

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are excited to share how we support early maths learning in Nursery and Reception, and how you can help your child develop strong, confident number skills at home.

In the Early Years, maths is explored through play, talk, and hands-on experiences. Children learn best when maths feels meaningful, fun, and connected to everyday life. Below you'll find the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) for maths, along with simple ideas you can use at home to support your child's learning.

Early Learning Goals in Maths

Number

By the end of Reception, children work towards being able to:

- Understand numbers to 10 deeply
- Count confidently and accurately
- Subitise (recognise small quantities without counting)
- Compare quantities using words like *more*, *fewer*, *equal*
- Recall number bonds to 5 and some to 10
- Use practical activities to explore addition and subtraction
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Numerical Patterns

Children also learn to:

- Spot, continue, and create patterns
- Compare quantities and talk about size, weight, capacity, and length
- Count beyond 20 and notice number patterns
- Explore shapes and spatial awareness

In Nursery

Nursery children build the foundations by:

- Counting objects, actions, and sounds
 - Using number words in play
 - Sorting, matching, and comparing
 - Exploring shapes and patterns
 - Developing early problem-solving skills
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Easy Maths Activities to Try at Home

1. Count Everything

- Steps up the stairs
- Apples in the fruit bowl
- Cars on the street
- Claps, jumps, or hops

2. Play “Spot the Pattern”

- Look for stripes, tiles, repeating colours
- Make patterns with toys, socks, or snacks

3. Number Hunt

- Find numbers on doors, buses, packaging
- Ask: “What number comes next?” or “Which is bigger?”

4. Build with Blocks or Lego

- Compare tower heights
- Count bricks
- Make repeating colour patterns

5. Baking Together

- Measure ingredients
- Talk about full/empty, heavy/light
- Count spoonfuls

6. Subitising Games

- Roll dice and say the number without counting
- Show 3–5 objects quickly and hide them

7. Sorting and Matching

- Socks, toys, buttons, leaves
- Sort by size, colour, shape, or type

8. Shape Walk

- Spot circles, squares, rectangles, triangles in the environment
- Talk about sides and corners

Subitising — instantly recognising small quantities — helps children develop number sense and prepares them for addition and subtraction.
