

National numeracy week activities to do at home with your kids

By Tierney Kennedy
author of *Back-to-Front Maths*

National literacy and numeracy week is a great way to reflect on what we as parents can do at home to help our kids. Mathematics is often the subject that most parents tend to shy away from, so here are a few simple suggestions for things that you can do at home to improve your child's understanding of maths.



1. Maths at breakfast:

Instead of presenting each child with their individual pieces of toast, present it altogether on one platter. Have each piece cut into quarters and ask your children how many pieces of bread there were originally. For older children, ask the question after a few of the quarters have been eaten.

2. Maths while out for a family walk:

Look at the house numbers as you walk up and down a street. Have your child predict the number of the next house. The numbers can go up or down, usually by twos, in either odd or even numbers.

3. Maths while planning your week:

Time is one of the most difficult concepts for kids to understand. Try asking your kids to work out how long it is until... (e.g. If we need to be at Grandma's at 3:00 and it takes 15 minutes to get there, what time do we need to leave?) This is really important to do for days/weeks as well as hours/minutes. For example, "It is Thursday today, so how many days are there until you start school again on Monday?"

4. Maths while shopping:

Estimating weight can be really tricky for kids. Why not get them to estimate how much your bag of apples weighs then confirm by measuring it on the scales? Also, remember to talk about price comparisons. For example, if Kipfler potatoes cost \$4.99/kg but washed potatoes cost \$5.99 for a 4kg bag, how much more expensive would the Kipflers be for the same amount? Estimate rather than calculating exactly (e.g. Kipflers would be \$5 for one kilogram, or \$20 for 4kg whereas the washed potatoes would cost \$6 for 4kg).

5. Maths with pocket money:

Giving kids a small amount of pocket money and teaching them to be responsible with it is one of the most valuable things that children can learn. Instead of just having a generic piggy bank, consider using a multi-sectioned container so that the money can be allocated for different things. Our sections are: spending, saving, presents and charity. When your kids ask for a toy, talk about the price in terms of weeks of pocket money rather than absolute dollars. This gives them a sense of the relative cost and will help them to become more money savvy in the long run.

6. Maths with plastic bottles:

Skittles is a great way of helping kids to become solid with their number understandings. Setting up 6 plastic bottles and rolling a tennis ball at them is a great way to spend an afternoon. My little kids love yelling out "I knocked three down, I have three left!"

7. High five alternatives:

Why not try doing "cool high fives" with fingers from both hands? You can have two fingers on one and three on the other...

Have a great numeracy week everyone and have lots of fun making maths part of your everyday life.