

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read further on how to help your child in maths. Maths in EYFS can be broadly split into 2 categories, **number** and **numerical patterns**. Counting is a key element in both categories.

There are **four main skills** that children need to develop before they can count.

1. Recognition of the sounds of the numbers.
2. The understanding of one-to-one correspondence.
3. The understanding of "How many are there?"
4. The number of objects is the same however they are arranged.

The next stage is for your child to recognise numbers as symbols which can be taught by playing number recognition games. Once children recognise numbers they will want to start writing them themselves. To help encourage them to form their numbers correctly, use our number formation guide (found at the back of this leaflet).

In reception, your child will be working on developing the following skills:

Children in Reception
• Count objects, actions and sounds.
• Subitise.
• Link the number symbol (numeral) with its cardinal number value.
• Count beyond ten.
• Compare numbers.
• Understand the 'one more than/one less than' relationship between consecutive numbers.
• Explore the composition of numbers to 10.
• Automatically recall number bonds for numbers 0–5 and some to 10.
• Select, rotate and manipulate shapes in order to develop spatial reasoning skills.
• Compose and decompose shapes so that children recognise a shape can have other shapes <i>within</i> it, just as numbers can.
• Continue, copy and create repeating patterns.
• Compare length, weight and capacity.

Skill 1

Children need to learn the sounds of the numbers 'one, two, three...'.

Children can start to recognise the sound of numbers from an early age if they hear number songs and rhymes and hear people counting. Some examples of rhymes are:

Five currant buns in the baker's shop
1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Once I caught a fish alive
Five fat sausages frying in a pan
1 potato, 2 potato, 3 potato, 4

Books and stories that include numbers can help too. At story time make a point of counting the characters and the key items in the pictures.

Some examples of books are:

Goldilocks and the Three Bears
The Three Billy Goats Gruff
The Very Hungry Caterpillar
The Three Little Pigs

These will give reinforcement to the sound of counting and with it the fact that numbers relate to different amounts. Children will then start to notice numbers in speech and begin to develop an understanding of how they are used.

Skill 2

Before learning to count a child needs to understand 'one to one correspondence'. This means being able to match one object to one other object or person.

You can practise 'one to one correspondence' (1-1 correspondence) in all sorts of different contexts. One to one correspondence means counting accurately by touch one object and saying the number 1, then touch another object and say 2, etc.

Skill 3

Children need to understand what is meant by 'How many are there?'.

Counting

As you count objects together touch each one. This helps children to understand they are counting one thing at a time (1-1 correspondence). Also, only count up to three at first and do not progress until your child can do this successfully. Gradually add one more number at a time. Counting opportunities arise with everyday objects such as food or toys. Your child will also be learning to subitise. Subitising is the ability to see and recognise a quantity (up to 6) without counting each one individually. This can be done using objects, dice patterns, dominoes and dots.



Skill 4

The number of objects is the same however they are arranged.

Ordering Numbers

Make some cards with numbers on one side and the corresponding number of spots on the reverse. Lay the cards out with the **spotted** sides upwards and ask your child to put them in order.

It is important that he or she can recognise the number of objects **however they are arranged**. Using the cards theme, you can represent some numbers with different patterns of spots. Ask your child to match the cards with the same number of spots. Take the opportunity also, to arrange everyday items in different formations, for your child to count.