

Maths: Age 3–4 (Early Years)

It's never too early to explore numbers with your child. Real life often provides the best opportunities to develop early maths skills like counting and recognising numbers. These ideas will help your child to explore numbers, giving them a great start to developing early maths skills and concepts.

Things to try with your child

1. Listen to and sing songs and rhymes

Sing – even if it isn't your strong point! Sing counting songs, such as '10 Green Bottles', '1, 2, Buckle My Shoe' and '1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Once I Caught a Fish Alive'. Singing songs is a good way for children to become familiar with counting. Don't worry if they choose the same songs again and again!

2. Talk about numbers around you

Numbers are all around us, from calendars to the remote control, the telephone to car registration plates. Try pointing out numbers when you're out and about – on front doors, signs, the front of buses and train platforms. Talking about numbers around you early and often will show your child that numbers are part of everyday life. Choose a 'Number of the Week' and see how many times you can spot this number, around the house, out in the street or in the supermarket.

3. Read together

Share a book with your child. There are many fantastic books based around numbers, but any book can be used to help children develop early counting and number recognition skills. Take time to talk about what your child can see on each page. Count objects on the page, and compare the number of objects from page to page. Look at the page numbers and say them together.

4. Count as much as you can

Count whenever you can – count together, as well as letting your child see and hear you counting. Practise chanting numbers and, as your child's confidence grows, start from different numbers – 5, 6, 7, etc. Count real objects – your child's toy cars, pencils, shoes, or the number of stairs in your house. Don't worry if your child remembers the answer – they can count to check!

Try to stick to a single type of object for each counting activity, and encourage your child to touch or pick up each object as they count it. Ask your child to help you sort cutlery or laundry, counting as you sort. When you go out for a walk, count your footsteps, the number of cars or houses you see etc.

5. Get your hands dirty

Help your child to learn the numerals by exploring their shapes. Have fun forming numbers in sand with a stick, on the pavement with chalk or on sheets of paper with finger paints. Make numbers out of modelling clay. Form numbers out of small objects such as pieces of pasta or beads. Try holding your child's finger and forming the number in the air. All these activities can help your child to become more familiar with numerals and enjoy themselves in the process!

6. Play maths games

Try these **fun games** with your child to practise early maths skills and help to build your child's confidence. Most children love playing games and it's an easy way to support their learning.

[Maths games and activities for age 3-4](#)