



Learning to speak, read, write and communicate well begins at birth. Here's what you can do to build your children's language and literacy skills in fun everyday activities.

Math is all around us!

Tip Sheet #9

Why?

Numeracy, like literacy, begins at birth. Numeracy is much more than just numbers. It includes skills such as shape recognition, comparison, matching, grouping, measuring, and sequencing. Young children learn many important math skills through their everyday experiences. Children learn math best through play and exploration. As a parent, your attitude that math is fun will help your child gain confidence and be successful in learning math at school.

Starting at Birth:

Talk and sing. Have fun with counting songs and finger plays. (Examples: Round and round the garden..., Five little monkeys jumping on the bed...)

Additional Tips for Toddlers and Preschoolers:

Use "Math Talk" in everyday conversations. Use words like more/less, bigger/smaller, older/younger, nearer/farther, full/empty, first/second/third, longer/shorter, heavier/lighter, higher/lower and equals. Talk about size, height, weight, distance, etc.

Count with your child. Point to items with your child one at a time and count them out loud. Show your child that each item can only be counted once. Pause and ask your child "What comes next?"

Cook with your child. Talk about the steps in a recipe, practice measuring, use a timer, count ingredients, estimate how many you can make.

Play board games that involve counting. Count the dots on the die and spaces on the board in games like "snakes and ladders"

Point out the numbers around you. Show your child telephone numbers, prices, house numbers, etc.

Problem solving: Provide opportunities for your child to solve simple math problems (Examples: we have two guests coming, how many plates do we need? We have four toy cars and two friends, how can we divide them?)

Find shapes: Talk about circles, squares, triangles and rectangles with your child in books and in the world around you

Sorting and Matching: Do everyday sorting and matching activities (Examples: sort toys in different ways, by type, size, shape or colour, match socks, mittens, cutlery)

Additional Tips for Kindergarten Children:

Play with a number line. Make a simple number line with a long strip of paper (0-10). Have your child use it to count small items by placing one on each number starting at one.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Sequencing. Put things in order based on different characteristics (darkest to lightest, smallest to largest, steps to make a snowman).

Have fun with patterns Help your child find simple repeating patterns in nature, clothing, songs and pictures. (Stripes on a shirt, designs in carpets or tiles). Create simple patterns with toys and everyday items so that your child can learn to copy, continue and create their own simple patterns (black rock, white rock, black rock, white rock...).

Use more math words and introduce new ideas. When cutting food or play dough use words like half, quarters or thirds. Talk about adding and subtracting. Start with words like "and one more makes", "take one away" and "how many do you have now?"