

Numeracy: Time and Money

Numeracy is about counting and numbers as well as understanding measurement, money, weight, awareness of time and how to handle information. Through play and daily activities children can develop the numeracy skills that are so necessary for everyday living.



What do we mean by 'time'?

Long before your child is able to look at a clock and read the time, they are developing a sense of passing time through regular meal times, bath times and bed times. Daily and weekly routines such as going to nursery, visiting grandparents, shopping and other regular events help them to understand the passing and repeat patterns in time, whether daily or weekly.

Talking about when something will happen and drawing their attention to the numbers on the clock face will prepare them for reading and recognising formal time as they get older. With your help they will also begin to notice and recognise the passing of the year through the changing seasons.

Talking about their birthday, marking events and family birthdays on the calendar and counting 'sleeps' until they come around, also starts to develop their sense of time and how some events are fixed in it.



What do we mean by 'money'?

Learning about money is more than just recognising and naming coins or notes. Children need to learn the purpose and value of money first, so draw their attention when you are paying for shopping, whether you use cash or a card.

The size, colour and shape of our coins or notes doesn't always give us a clue to their value. Showing your child coins, looking at the numbers on them and talking about what they might be able to buy with them will help them to build up a sense of the value of money. It also helps their basic numeracy skills of number recognition and counting.

Talking about paying bills can also help them understand that we have to pay for some things we need in life that we cannot always see or touch, like electricity, gas or saving up for a holiday. An important aspect of managing money for your child in the future is that we have to plan and be responsible with our money.

Depending on your child's age and stage of development, please turn over to find some suggestions to try at home ➡



Some suggestions to help your child understand **time**

- Give your baby a running commentary on what you are doing in terms of before, now, next, for example, 'Right that's you all nice and clean, now we'll put on your nappy; then we'll get you dressed'. As they get older make sure you include terms such as yesterday, today and tomorrow or last week, this week and next week in your conversations to help develop a sense of passing time.
- Talk about when routine events happen during the day - breakfast time, lunch time, dinner time, bed time.
- As regular events happen point them out to your child, for example, 'Today is Monday so it's a nursery day' or 'It's Tuesday - Granny watches you today'. This will help your child become familiar with the names of the days of the week and their sequence.
- Plan your day together with your child - what you should do first, what next, before or after lunch etc.
- Talk together about the seasons as they change, naming them and drawing your child's attention to the weather, dark/light nights, changes in the trees and gardens etc.
- You can count 'how many sleeps' together towards an important event. Birthdays are a good opportunity for this and they also allow you to talk about big chunks of time like a year, as you think about increasing ages.
- Your child will gradually learn the sequence of days and months if you regularly refer to them in relation to events that are important to them, for example, 'We are going to the caravan in June' or 'You start nursery in August'.
- Keep a big dear kitchen calendar and mark events on it with your child.
- When your child is ready, you can start pointing out the time on a traditional clock (digital clocks should not be used in the first instance - they will come later). Make sure the clock face has all the numbers on it and that they are easily read. You can say things like 'When the little hand is here and the big hand is there, it will be time for your TV programme/bed/dinner'.



Some suggestions to help your child understand **money**

- Let your child play with coins exploring their shape, weight, colour and size. With older children you can start to point out the numbers on them and perhaps line them up from 1 to 10, discovering that bigger coins do not always have bigger numbers on them, talking about value. Always supervise your child when playing with coins in case they put them to their mouths and wash their hand well afterwards.
- When shopping look at price labels with your child. Discuss cheaper and dearer.
- When it comes time to pay let them see you count out your money.
- If you pay by card talk to your child about what this means and how the money is moving out of your bank account into the shop's.
- When you shop online explain how the payment is made in the same way by giving your name and card number.
- Similarly when you take money out of a cash dispenser discuss with your child where it comes from and why you can do this — importantly that the money needs to be in your bank in the first place! It's good to talk about what you can or cannot afford.
- Help your child plan the spending of their pocket money or saving for a bigger item.
- Discuss options such as we can get two of these or one of those for the same money.
- Play at shops at home with your child. Use real items from your cupboard and make price tags. It could be a penny shop only to start with to make adding the bill easier.

Hopefully these suggestions have sparked some ideas of your own. Have fun trying them with your child.

