

Ideas and Activities to Develop maths skills in Young Children

- ❖ Use maths terms with children when you are talking to them or showing them things around them. For example- How much? How long? What time? How Many? Which shape?
- ❖ Other maths terms to use would be those used to compare such as- heavy/light, tall/short, full/empty, big/small/ high/low, more/less.
- ❖ When you are unpacking shopping ask your child to help you put it away. This will improve their concept of sorting. Similar activities could be putting all the animals in one box, the cars in another. Ask children to sort things according to colour or shape.
- ❖ Look at patterns with children. Ask children what comes next when you put blocks or Lego bricks in a line of yellow, red, yellow, red...Use shapes to encourage children to determine what comes next----triangle, square, circle, triangle, etc. Threading beads is another way to look at repeating patterns
- ❖ To improve the concept of “sharing” when children are playing with dolls you could share cakes between them or ask your child to share the cars between you and them.
- ❖ Matching cups with saucers, gloves, socks, knives with forks and so on is an essential maths skill. Matching is the basis for the concept of one-to-one correspondence and one-on-one-correspondence is a fundamental component of the concept of number.

- ❖ Snap is a good game to encourage matching.
- ❖ Teach number through songs like: “1,2,3,4,5 once I caught a fish alive,” “5 Little Ducks,” “10 Green Bottles,” “5 Cheeky Monkeys,” “1,2 buckle my shoe.”
- ❖ Point out shapes around you
- ❖ Buy some magnetic numbers and have them on the fridge for your child to touch and manipulate.
- ❖ Have a sand pit and water tray for the children to play in. Using these helps children to explore and investigate and will increase their understanding of volume and capacity and concepts like full/empty, heavy/light. The equipment you provide them with is also important. They should have buckets and containers, shapes to use with wet sand, items that will float and sink. You could also put bubbles into the water or add food colouring.
- ❖ Teach your child the names of colours do lots of drawing and colouring in together and as you are drawing say, I am going to colour the house red etc
- ❖ Cooking is an enjoyable way for your child to learn more about number, if it is a messy one. Tell them how many spoonfuls to add to the mixture and they can weigh ingredients as they get older.

***See also “Language Ideas” for how to put both together into play activities**

