

Using ICT to help your Child

Listed below are some websites that could be useful in supporting your child's learning.

[www.primaryresources.co.uk](http://www.primaryresources.co.uk) Maths

[www.educationcity.co.uk](http://www.educationcity.co.uk) (subscription needed)

[www.epresso.co.uk](http://www.epresso.co.uk) (subscription needed.)

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) (schools/parents)

# Thomas Russell Infants' School

*A parents' guide to  
helping your  
child with Numeracy*



### Why helping at home is important

Mathematics is one of the most important subjects that your child studies at school. Numbers are all around us and even if you don't feel yourself to be a mathematics genius, there is plenty that you can do. In fact, your child should enjoy most of the suggested activities so much that s/he won't even realise that it's educational! Current teaching methods for maths and even the way that sums are recorded appear very different from those used ten years ago. As a result, parents are sometimes reluctant to help their children with maths homework for fear of doing things in the wrong way. However, children do really benefit when parents take a keen interest in their mathematical learning. You can help your child/ren to gain confidence and develop a positive attitude towards mathematics by talking about what has been taught at school and helping them to notice and use mathematics in an everyday context.



- Try to make the activities enjoyable. We want children to learn maths and to succeed in the subject. They are more likely to do this if you give them plenty of encouragement and make it fun!
- If the activity is taking too long, leave it at a suitable point. It is more important that the children have a go than that they struggle on for hours.

Please return the activity to school with any comments. We will discuss the homework in class and what the children have shared at home will help us to clarify their understanding of the concepts. We always treat returned pieces of homework in a positive manner and value both the child's and the parents involvement in this activity.

Research shows that the most important factor in children's educational success is the home. By sharing a short maths activity with your child each week you are participating in their education, valuing what they do at school and learning some maths together. You do not have to be a great mathematician to help - just a willing partner! Thank you for your continued and valued support.

## Homework

We feel it is very important that parents engage in their children's learning and feel part of their child's education within school from the earliest age. Therefore children will bring home, at least once every two weeks, a piece of numeracy homework to be shared by you or someone else at home. It is through talking about their maths, discussing how they do things and working it out in collaboration with someone else that children learn best. We have compiled some simple guidelines, which we hope will help you have lots of fun with your child whilst also improving their mathematical ability.

- Read through the activity together. The activity is written for you to read to them or with your child, rather than for them to read alone.
- Please allow your child to be the 'leader' in the activity. They will learn more by explaining their thinking and the strategies that they are using. Try to listen as much as possible to how they do things, rather than suggesting methods of your own. Encourage them to be confident in their thoughts, guiding them when necessary.

## **Ideas and tips**

Try some of these to reinforce learning that has taken place at school: (Some activities may have already been discussed)

- A key part of every numeracy session in school is mental maths, so practise at home. Children must get used to solving problems in their heads, rather than resorting to a calculator. Play games with your child: throw two dice add or multiply the numbers. Try to increase the pace of this activity.
- Play snakes and ladders, darts, dominoes and other games that depend on numbers, counting, calculation and scoring. 'Battleships' is a fun way to use graphs. Invest in a range of maths puzzle books.
- Talk about pocket money with your child. Help them to add it up week by week, and work out whether they can afford a particular toy or treat. Shop using money and calculate change.
- Add number apparatus to your child's toy collection - counters, a purse full of change, dice, dominoes, a tape measure, ruler, pack of cards, timer, different shapes - and use them to make mathematics come alive.

### Ideas and tips continued ..

- Be creative! Ask your child to look out for patterns and shapes on floors, wallpaper, plants, animals, buildings - anything from the arrangement of tiles in the kitchen to the markings on the cat. Draw objects made entirely of triangles, rectangles or squares: make 'butterfly' pictures by painting on one half of the paper and folding it over so that the image is mirrored. Make mobiles by suspending objects from coat hangers and ensuring they balance.
- Think about time. Look at clocks, both digital and analogue. Estimate how long a certain activity will take to do and see if you are right! Work out how long it is until the next mealtime. Play games: how long is a minute, starting from now?
- Think about calendars and dates too. Make a timeline that includes the birthdays of each member of the family and work out how far apart each one is. Use different units: months, weeks and days, even hours, minutes and seconds. Add other important events, such as a family holiday, and encourage your child to count down to the big day.

- *Guess my number*

This is a useful game for playing on a journey. As your child plays the game they will practise thinking about the order of numbers.

Start the game by saying to your child ' I am thinking of a number between 1 and 10'. Explain that the aim of the game is to guess the mystery number by asking questions and that you will only answer 'yes' or 'no'.

Children soon learn that it is more useful to ask "Is the number bigger than 5?" than to ask 'Is it 7?' Older children can progress to guessing mystery numbers up to 100, and as they progress they should be able to use questions such as :

'Is it an odd number?'

'Is the number a multiple of 10?' (e.g. 20, 30, 40)



- Make a target game; Place three or four empty boxes in the floor. Label each box with a number between 1 and 5. Encourage your child to help you to make up rules for the game. How many paper balls can you throw in a turn? How many does the winner of the game need to score altogether?
- Play a hidden objects game; This game is a good way of developing the skills your child will need in doing sums 'in their head'. It helps children to imagine numbers of objects. Place five small objects on a tray; buttons, coins, counters or pebbles etc. Show your child that there are five objects and count them together. Now cover the objects with a cloth and slide your hand under the cloth to remove one or two of the objects from the tray. Show your child how many objects you have removed and ask: 'How many things are left on the tray?' What are they? This activity increases a child's ability to memorise and recall. As your child becomes more confident, start with a larger of objects on the tray.

- Cooking is great for helping your child get to know simple weights and measures. An old-fashioned set of balance scales is ideal. Count out spoonfuls of ingredients. Let your child help you set the timer and count down to teatime! Later on, this is a good way to introduce the idea of fractions too. As you are aware, your child will be learning the metric system at school, so remember to measure amounts in grams and kilograms.
- Use learning games on educational websites: check out the [BBC Schools Games Machine](#) for lots of ideas.

### **Games to practise addition and subtraction**

- Playing skittles; Make a set of skittles using ten cardboard tubes which can be knocked over with a soft ball. After each throw talk about the score: There were ten skittles and we knocked over 6. There are 4 left standing up. 6 and 4 make 10. This increases their ability with number bonds up to 10—20 by increasing the numbers on the skittles. You can further develop this idea by using multiplication—doubling the score on each skittle etc.