

# Golden Rules

- ✓ **DO** 'little and often'! Counting on the stairs, doing up buttons or jumping into the bath, is a relaxed way of reinforcing and practising this skill.
- ✗ **DON'T** push a skill, such as counting, if a child is tired or bored. They may come to feel 'pressured' and have a natural reaction against it.
- ✓ **DO** give LOTS of praise. Resist the temptation to say, 'but' or to point out mistakes every time. Children need encouragement and positive reinforcement to be confident. Remember that a confident child makes a better learner.
- ✓ **DO** play games! Jigsaws and games of all sorts make excellent excuses for helping your child do maths whilst sharing something important together and having fun. Dominoes, dice or card games, and other commercial games are all great!
- ✗ **DON'T** worry about your child doing written sums! Children will learn to write their numbers and record their maths at school, where teachers will ensure that they do these things correctly. At home it is the mental maths that counts!
- ✓ **DO** remember that your focussed attention is a far more important and pleasurable commodity for any child than any amount of TV or video game activity. Every child wants to be doing things one-on-one with someone they love and trust.



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## Your Child with...

# MATHS

Where did I lay those eggs? If only I had drawn a plan!



AGES: PRE SCHOOL

## Simple advice on helping a pre-school child to do maths...

In children's first years, we parents can really have a big effect on their mathematical enthusiasm and attainment. Not by 'teaching them maths' – arguably this will put them off or confuse them! But by being sensitive to all those day-to-day situations in which mathematical ideas arise or mathematical skills can be practised. This includes:

**Counting as you go** – chant the numbers one to ten whenever it feels natural to do so! On the stairs, doing up buttons, walking along a wall... The more counting together you do the better!

**Finding how many** – count and touch the objects in a set to find how many. How many cars on my road? Marbles on the run? Crisps on my plate? Remember to show children how we touch each one as we count it – this avoids making mistakes!

**Recognising numbers** – point out numbers wherever you see them. They can be spotted on buses and houses, in the pages of books, on birthday cards, as scores in a game, on sweatshirts or pyjamas...

**Recognising arrays** – these are arrangements of dots, pictures or objects that children can come to identify without having to count them. 'That's two' pointing at 2 drinks. 'I threw a six!' about a dice throw.

**Sequencing and ordering** – thread beads, create patterns and above all, sequence actions and sounds (clap hands, jump, wave). Putting things in an order really helps children get the hang of this vital concept.

**Sorting** – the more children can classify things and explain their thinking, the better their mathematical reasoning will be. 'These are red, these are squares, and these special ones are red squares!'

