

## Using **calculators** can help your child's numeracy

### Using the calculator to count with decimal fractions

To count by 0.5 press

0 . 5 + = =

To count by 0.05s press

0 . 0 5 + = =

*Please note that some older calculators may operate differently from this.*

Try this with your child and ask them to stop and predict which number comes next. Check to find out.

Encourage your child to count as far as they can go.

Ask your child to say the numbers as they show on the screen. Some children enjoy writing the numbers on a long strip of paper and then looking for patterns.

### Using the calculator to play games

**Back to Zero:** Have your child put in a number like 349.65 and ask them what they need to do to change the number to 349.05 in just one move. (They need to know that the 6 in 349.65 stands for 6 tenths or 0.6 and then subtract 0.6 to get to 349.05). You could take turns and continue the game until the screen shows 0.

### Using the calculator to work out how much?

When shopping encourage your child to use a calculator to add up the cost of 3 or 4 items. Ask: *Does the result on the calculator look right? What does it say in dollars and cents?* Talk about totals which add up to amounts like \$15.24. Ask: *How much will you pay?*



If you would like to know more...

- Contact your local school or talk with your child's teacher
- Look up the web and use some of the following key words to search: numeracy, number sense, mathematical games, number, chance and data

This brochure is on the internet at:  
[www.dest.gov.au/schools/publications/index.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/publications/index.htm)  
and  
[www.gu.edu.au/school/cls/clearinghouse/](http://www.gu.edu.au/school/cls/clearinghouse/)

Further copies of this brochure can be ordered from:  
**The Clearinghouse for National Literacy and Numeracy**  
Research on telephone 07 3875 5703



Australian Government  
Department of Education, Science and Training

LATER PRIMARY YEARS

# Numeracy: families working it out together

the opportunities are everywhere



This brochure has been funded by the Australian Government as part of its commitment to improving numeracy outcomes for all students.

## What do we mean by numeracy?

Children develop numeracy skills when they use mathematical ideas in their everyday situations.

They begin to make sense of these situations by asking questions such as:



## Can families help?

**YES!**

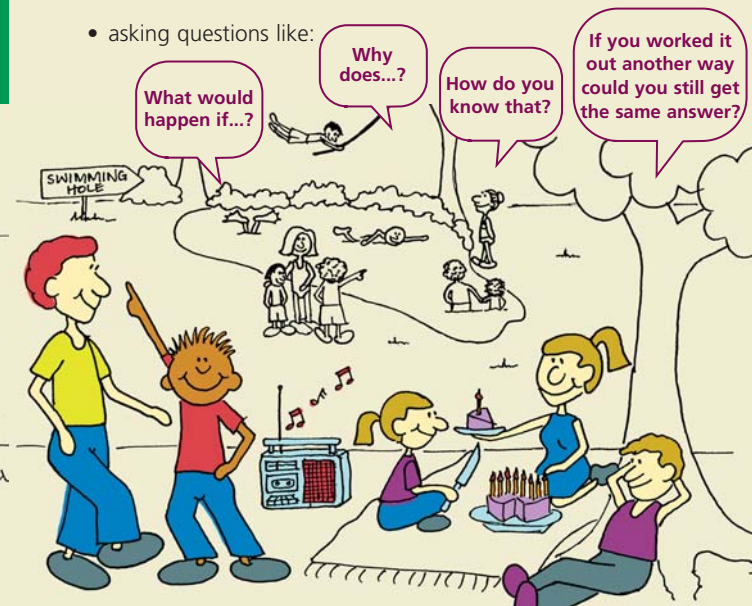
You may feel that the maths children do at school is different from how you were taught, or that maths was not your best subject. You are however still able to help your child in many ways.

The information that follows will assist you in helping children learn and enjoy using their mathematical ideas in daily activities.

## How can families help?

### Responding to children's ideas by...

- listening to, and talking with them about which is the better deal when buying things
- using their ideas and suggestions for planning parties, holidays and day-to-day family routines
- asking questions like:



### Pointing out...

- the numbers talked about in the news, or scores, distances, times, world records in sporting events and attendance at games

### Looking for opportunities where children can...

- choose from a variety of computer programs to solve problems or find information
- organise their spending money and plan some social events
- be involved in selecting and organising video recording using television program schedules

## How can families and schools work together?

**Talk** with your child's teacher about numeracy at home and at school and raise any concerns with them.

**Ask** the teacher how you can support the class mathematics program at home.

**Help** your child to enjoy the mathematics they do at school by talking positively about work they bring home.

**Support** the teacher/school by attending parent meetings and volunteering your time or support.

**Find out** how mathematics teaching has changed since you were at school.

**Find out** how your child uses a calculator at school.

**Attend** parent evenings in preparation for your child's transition to secondary school.





### Fridge List

Encourage your child to ask questions like these to make sense of their everyday situations...

How much is there?

Will there be enough?

How big is it?

Which way will I go?

What might happen if...?

Is it likely to happen?

How do you know that?

If you worked it out another way could you still get the same answer?

Does it fit?

How many?



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## Fridge List

Families can look for opportunities to point out and respond to children's numeracy ideas.

Here are some examples:

### Travelling:

When planning a long car trip involve your child in making decisions about the best way to get there.

Ask: *Which is the quickest way? How long do you think it will take?* Ask them to use a map to give you directions.

When your child is going on a bus or train ask them to use timetables to decide which one to catch so they are on time. Ask: *What time will you be home? Which bus will you be catching?* Talk about how long they will be gone.

### Sport:

Talk with your child about statistics from games and events. Ask: *Who is the leading goal scorer? What is this player's personal best time? Can they win in the time remaining? What are the chances that it will rain during the finals this year?*

### At home and shopping:

When deciding to record TV programs involve children in setting the video recorder. Ask: *What time does the program start? How long does it go for? Do we have enough room on the tape?*

When your child wants to buy something with their own money, help them to plan how to save for it.

Use shopping specials to talk about items they want to buy. Ask: *What price will it be after the discount? Is it cheaper to buy the large one or two small ones? Is the smaller one half the price?*



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