

Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center

Early Maths at Home: Building Your Child's Number Sense

inclusivetherapycentre.com · +92 314 6040262

✿ Written by the Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center therapy team · **medically reviewed by Dr Muhammad Suffyan**, MB BS (GMC 8023727) · Last reviewed July 2026

✓ Can I help my child at home?

Yes, you really can. Build your child's number sense — counting, knowing “how many”, comparing amounts and spotting patterns — through play and ordinary daily moments. This free program breaks it down into simple weekly steps, built from proven therapy techniques — things any parent can do at home, in everyday moments, at no cost. It doesn't replace a professional assessment where one is needed, but for a lot of children it makes a real difference, and it never does any harm.

Go at your own pace — a new, gentle focus each week.

Download the whole program as a printable PDF to keep.

Includes the signs that mean it's worth getting a bit of extra help.

Early maths at home does not start with worksheets or times tables. It starts with counting the stairs, sharing biscuits fairly and noticing who has more. Those small moments build number sense — a real feel for what numbers mean — and children who have it find school maths far easier later. This free program, one of our **parent-led home programs for children**, turns that into five to ten playful minutes a day, using things already in your house.

If you have caught yourself thinking *mera bacha ginti nahi seekhta* — my child just isn't picking up counting — you are in very good company. Reciting “one, two, three” and understanding that three means three things are two different skills, and for most children they arrive months apart. This program builds the second one, in order, a week at a time.

Early number sense, step by step

A rough order, not a deadline

2–3 yrs

Joins in with counting words

3–4 yrs

Counts small groups, one by one

4–5 yrs

Knows how many; compares amounts

5–6 yrs

Reads numerals; adds with objects

6+ yrs

Numbers past ten; takes away

These activities support your child's early maths. They are not an assessment and they cannot diagnose anything. Children learn at their own pace, so if your child's learning worries you — or the difficulty shows up at home and at school — please speak to a professional as well, or start with our **free 2-minute developmental check**.

♥ Who this program is for

- ✓ Parents of toddlers and preschoolers who are just starting with numbers and counting
- ✓ Children who can recite numbers but do not yet know “how many”
- ✓ Families who want playful, everyday maths instead of worksheets and pressure

- ✓ Children getting ready for school, or finding the first year of school maths hard — if your child is older and written schoolwork is the bigger struggle, begin with our reading and writing program for older children
- ✓ Parents who found maths difficult themselves and want simple, low-stress ideas
- ✓ Children with a developmental or learning difficulty who need numbers broken into smaller steps — Learning and Life Skills, our program for children with an intellectual disability, breaks each skill down further still

Important – when to get professional help

This is a supportive home program — it isn't a diagnosis, and it doesn't replace a proper assessment. Please speak to a professional soon if:

Marked, ongoing difficulty with numbers compared with children of the same age, even after months of short, regular practice — one possible reason is dyscalculia, and only a proper assessment can tell you

Your child loses counting or number skills they had clearly gained before

Real distress, tears or determined avoidance whenever numbers or maths come up

Trouble telling small amounts apart — not seeing that four biscuits is more than two — well past the fourth birthday

Maths difficulty alongside trouble with speech, reading, memory or following instructions

The difficulty is knocking your child's confidence, or their school has raised it with you

Getting help where you live

Everything here is free to use **anywhere in the world**. If you'd like a professional to take a closer look, the best next step is someone local to you:

Work with us online, from anywhere. We offer **online sessions and parent coaching** worldwide — book an online consultation and we'll guide you and your child directly.

Talk to your child's **doctor, paediatrician, GP or health visitor** — share what you noticed.

Ask about **free early-childhood or early-intervention services** in your area — many countries offer them for young children (e.g. Early Intervention in the US, NHS referrals in the UK).

Search “**child speech & language therapist near me**”, or ask your doctor for a referral.

Near Multan, Pakistan? You're also warmly welcome in person at our centre — **contact us here**.

☆ **Your step-by-step roadmap**

Move at your child's pace, not the calendar's — the “weeks” are just a gentle order, not a race. Feel free to repeat any stage for as long as it's helping.

Week 1 – Counting out loud, everywhere

Make counting a normal, cheerful part of the day.

Count real things together — stairs on the way up, spoons onto the table, buttons on a shirt, rotis onto the plate.

Touch each object as you say its number, so one number lands on one thing. This single habit does more work than anything else in the program.

Sing counting songs and rhymes, so the number order arrives in a way your child enjoys and remembers.

⚡ **Try** Count the same set backwards too — “3, 2, 1, blast off!” Children love **this:** it, and it shows the order works both ways.

Week 2 – “How many altogether?”

Move from reciting numbers to knowing amounts.

Ask “how many?” about a small group, count it together, then say the answer again: “one, two, three — three spoons.” That last repeat is what joins counting to meaning.

Stay with one to five at first. A solid grasp of small numbers is worth far more than a shaky sprint to twenty.

Lay out two or three objects and ask how many without counting — most children begin to simply see very small amounts.

 **Try** Roll a dice and name the dots. Over a few weeks your child will stop **this:** counting them and just know.

Week 3 – More, fewer and fair shares

Help your child compare amounts, sizes and lengths.

Use the words in ordinary moments rather than in a lesson — more, fewer, bigger, smaller, longer, heavier.

Line up two groups, ask which has more, then check together by counting both.

Share things out “one for you, one for me”, so equal amounts become something your child has felt rather than been told.

 **Try** Snack time is the best maths lesson of the day — comparing grapes or **this:** dates makes it real, and tasty.

Week 4 – Shapes, patterns and sorting

Grow the thinking skills that sit underneath maths.

Spot shapes around the house — round plates, square windows, triangle slices of paratha.

Build simple repeating patterns with blocks, buttons or colours: red, blue, red, blue.

Sort socks, toys or bottle tops into groups by colour, size or type, and let your child explain the rule they used.

 **Try** Start a pattern, then stop and look at your child. Waiting teaches far
this: more than telling.

Week 5 – Numbers in daily life

Show your child that numbers are useful, not school-only.

Count out steps inside real tasks — three cups for the table, four socks to fold, two shoes by the door.

Point out written numerals on doors, clocks, packets, buses and phones, and say what each one is for.

Think out loud: “we have three plates and four people, so we need one more.”

 **Try** Cooking together carries counting, measuring and sharing in one activity
this: — and the result is dinner. Our printable daily routine chart gives you a ready-made set of everyday moments to count through.

Week 6 – First adding and taking away

Join small amounts together and take them apart, with objects in hand.

Put two blocks and one more together, then count the lot: “two, and one more, makes three.”

Take one away and count again, so your child sees a number go down as well as up.

Hide a small amount under a cup and ask how many are left — a game that quietly builds mental maths.

⚡ **Try** Keep the objects on the table. Written sums come much later; **this:** understanding comes first — and so do the hand skills that come before the pencil.

Little tricks that make it work

- ✓ Keep it short and playful — five happy minutes beats twenty forced ones, every time. Play is how young children learn, and maths is no exception.
- ✓ Touch each item as you count: one number, one thing, in order.
- ✓ Follow your child’s interest and count the cars, dinosaurs, bangles or dolls they already love.
- ✓ Praise the thinking and the effort, not only the right answer.
- ✓ Use real objects your child can touch and move, not numbers on paper.
- ✓ Count in the language your family actually uses — ginti in Urdu, one-two-three in English, or both. The understanding carries across languages.
- ✓ Stay positive about maths yourself. Children hear “I was hopeless at maths” and quietly decide it runs in the family.
- ✓ Go back a step whenever it wobbles. Repeating an easy stage is not lost time — it is how it sticks.

How you'll know it's working

- Your child touches each object as they count, instead of racing ahead of their finger
- Your child answers “how many?” with the last number they counted
- Your child recognises two or three things at a glance, without counting them
- Your child uses comparing words — more, fewer, bigger — in their own sentences
- Your child notices numbers, shapes and patterns and points them out to you
- Your child joins two small groups together and says how many there are altogether



Is this based on real methods? This program follows the ordinary order in which early number understanding grows: counting in sequence, one-to-one correspondence (one number for one object), cardinality (the last number counted tells you how many), subitising (recognising two or three things at a glance), comparing amounts, patterns and sorting, and finally joining and separating small quantities. These are long-established building blocks of early mathematics, and working through them in order with real objects is what a special educator does in a session — this program simply puts the same sequence in your hands.

-  **Educational information, not a diagnosis.** Our guidance follows standard, research-based practice (CDC, NHS, ASHA and WHO), is written by our therapy team and **medically reviewed by a GMC-registered doctor**. Every child is different, so we can't promise specific results — always use your own judgement and speak to a qualified professional about your child. **Read our full disclaimer.**

Everyday Maths: questions parents ask