

Supporting Maths at Home: A Guide for Nursery Parents

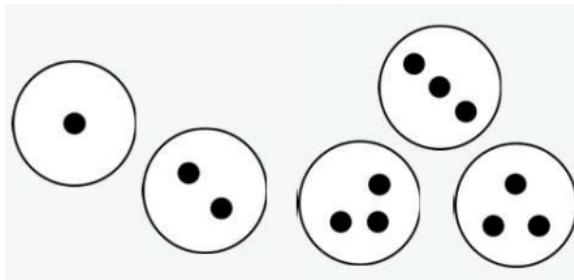
Wincham Community Primary School

In Nursery, maths is all about exploring and noticing. We don't focus on writing sums; instead, we build a "deep sense of number." We want children to understand what 'three' feels like, looks like, and how it can be made. Following the White Rose approach, we focus on counting, subitising, and patterns.

Here are some simple, play-based ways to support your child's early mathematical journey.

1. Subitising: "Fast Eyes"

What we do in school: Subitising is the ability to look at a small group of objects (up to 3) and know how many there are without counting them one by one.



How to help at home:

- **Dice Games:** When playing a game, ask: "Don't count the dots, just use your fast eyes! What number is it?"

- **Plate Patterns:** Put 2 or 3 pieces of fruit on a plate. Hide it under a tea towel, pop it off for one second, and hide it again. "How many did you

see?"

- **Button Spotting:** "I can see 2 buttons on your cardigan. I didn't even need to count them!"

2. Counting: More than just 1, 2, 3

What we do in school: We focus on "one-to-one correspondence"—pointing to one object for every number we say. We also learn that the last number we say is the total amount (cardinality).

How to help at home:

- **Stair Counting:** Count the steps as you go up to bed.
- **Setting the Table:** "We need 3 forks. Can you get them one at a time? One... two... three. How many forks do we have altogether?"
- **Touch Counting:** Encourage your child to move the objects as they count them (e.g., moving pennies from one pile to another) to ensure they don't count the same thing twice.

3. Composition: Making Numbers

What we do in school: We explore how numbers are made of smaller numbers. For example, 3 can be a 2 and a 1, or 1 and 1 and 1.

How to help at home:

- **Five Currant Buns:** Sing number rhymes. Use your fingers to show how many are left. "We had 5, one went away, now we have 4."
- **Toy Sorting:** "I have 4 cars. Can we put some in this garage and some in that one? Oh look, 2 here and 2 there still makes 4!"
- **Finger Talk:** Ask your child to "Show me 3 on your fingers." Then ask, "Can you show me 3 in a different way?" (e.g., two fingers on one hand and one on the other).

4. Shapes, Patterns, and Measures

What we do in school: We look for patterns in the environment and use "maths talk" to describe size, weight, and capacity.

How to help at home:

- **Bath Time Pouring:** Use different containers. "Which one holds the most? Is this bottle full or empty?"
- **Laundry Patterns:** "Let's make a pattern with the socks: Blue, White, Blue, White. What comes next?"
- **Shape Hunt:** Go on a walk around Wincham. "Can you find a circle? Look at that wheel! Can you find a square? Look at that window!"

Key Vocabulary for Nursery:

- **Subitise:** Seeing "how many" without counting.
- **Altogether:** The total amount when we put groups together.
- **More / Fewer:** Comparing amounts (e.g., "I have more bubbles than you").
- **Pattern:** Something that repeats.

Quick "Nursery" Everyday Math:

- **Tidying Up:** "Can you find 5 bricks and put them in the box?"
- **Cooking:** "We need two big spoons of flour and one small spoon of sugar."
- **Walking:** "Let's take 10 giant steps and 5 tiny ladybird steps."

Top Tip: At this age, maths should be "stealthy." If you can turn it into a game or a song, they will learn the concepts without even realizing they are "doing work"!