

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

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Helping your child with maths in FIRST CLASS

Many of us remember playing Ludo or Snakes and Ladders as children. As well as having fun, we were practicing maths 'in our heads' as we worked out how many steps to the next ladder or snake!

It's important for children to talk to others about their ideas in maths. As children learn at different rates, find out where your child is at by listening more than talking when doing maths together. This will help you to work out what your child is thinking. Good questions to ask include *how did you work that out? Could you do it another way?* When helping with homework, ask: *How do you do this in school?*

You can talk about maths in lots of activities like posting letters or emailing. When posting a birthday card, you might ask your child to check the post-box for the time of the next collection. Or when reading an email from Uncle Bill you could ask: *What time did he send it? What date did he send it?*



About this tip sheet

There are three sections in this tip sheet.

- 1: What your child is learning in school** tells you about the maths your child will learn in first class based on the Mathematics Curriculum for primary schools.
- 2: How your child learns at home** gives you tips to help your child with maths. There are also short video clips in the parents' section of the NCCA website at www.ncca.ie/primaryparents.
- 3: Learning about tens and units** explains how your child may be learning about numbers bigger than 9 and less than 100.

You can find more ideas in the tip sheets and videos for senior infants and second class.



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1: What your child is learning in school

Here is some of the maths your child will learn in first class in primary school.

- **Begin to understand addition tables up to 20**, for example $2+1=3$, $2+2=4$, $2+3=5$...
- **Read and write the numbers 0–100** and put them in order.
- **Understand the value of numbers**, for example the 4 in 54 means 4 units and the 3 in 30 means 3 tens.
- **Add and subtract** numbers with a **total less than 100**, for example $16+5$, $70+10$ and $18-5$.
- **Count forwards and backwards** in twos, fives and tens, for example 2, 4, 6...; 60, 50, 40...
- **Recognise patterns** in numbers including **odd and even** numbers. Think of pairs of gloves for even numbers 2, 4, 6... The odd numbers are where you have an extra glove! 3, 5, 7...
- By the **end** of first class your child should be able to put numbers **up to 100 in order**, for example 67, 23, 81 \Rightarrow 23, 67, 81.

Your child will also learn to:

- **sort and name shapes** such as a square, rectangle, triangle, circle, semi-circle (2-D or flat shapes), cube, cuboid, cylinder and sphere (3-D or shapes that are not flat).



- **measure objects in metres** and **talk** about lengths that are more than a metre, less than a metre, about a metre, and exactly a metre. Your child will also be **talking about** and **weighing objects in kilograms** and **measuring liquids in litres**.
- **read time in hours and half-hours**, for example recognise times like three o'clock and half-past four on a clock.
- **recognise, exchange and use money** up to at least **50 cents**. Children should also be able to swap coins for those of equal value, for example 20 cents for two 10 cent coins or four 5 cent coins.

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2: How your child learns at home

Learn about addition tables

Find out which tables your child already knows, for example $3+1$, $3+2$, $3+3$. If they know $3+3=6$ then they should be able to work out what $3+2$ is (one less) or what $3+4$ is (one more). Learn those which add to make 10, for example $1+9$, $2+8$, $3+7$.

Add and subtract

Help your child to see how adding and subtracting are linked. Use small numbers at first.

$$\begin{array}{ll} 3+4=7 & 4+3=7 \\ 7-3=4 & 7-4=3 \end{array}$$

Read time in hours or half-hours

Draw your child's attention to times. *We have swimming at 5.30. What time will we need to leave the house at? Look in the TV Guide; what time does your favourite programme start?*

Measure

Encourage your child to work out approximately how many kilograms a bag of rice weighs or how many litres in a bottle. Then check by weighing or measuring. Talk about the markings on the weighing scales or the measuring jug.

Recognise, swap and use coins

Ask your child to put items less than 50 cents in order from the cheapest to the dearest. Ask: *How many 10 cent coins can I change my 50 cent coin for? The orange costs 45 cents and the apple is 40 cents. Which is cheaper? How much change will I get if I buy an orange?*

Have fun with numbers

You and your child can have fun with numbers on car registration plates. When walking through a car park, ask your child: *What numbers can you see on the cars' plates? Can you find a plate where two of the numbers add up to 10, 12... Add all the numbers on the plate. Which of us can get the bigger number?*

Play games

Here's a fun skittles game. Put some small stones or rice in the bottoms of plastic bottles to make a set of 5 skittles. Put a number on each, for example 10, 25, 5, 15, 0. Roll a ball and keep a score as you knock the skittles down. Ask your child to work out the final scores.



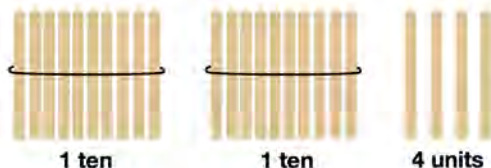
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3: Learning about tens and units

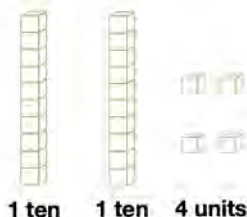
In school your child will be learning about the **value** of numbers.

For example, in 32 the 3 stands for 3 tens (30) and the 2 stands for 2 units but in 23 the 2 stands for 2 tens (20) and the 3 stands for 3 units.

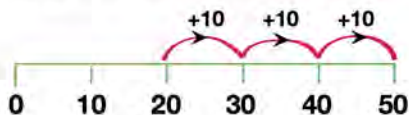
When learning about place value in school, your child might use **lollipop sticks** to show a number by putting them in bundles of 10 and loose ones (units). For example, 24 is shown as 2 bundles of 10 and 4 units.



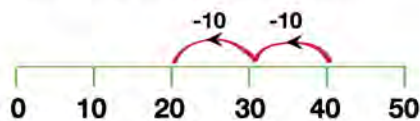
Your child might also use materials called **Base 10**. Using these materials, 24 would look like this:



Your child may use **number lines** to add and subtract big numbers, for example $20+30$. *Put your finger on 20 on the number line and count on 30. What number are you on now?*



Let's do $40-20$. *Put your finger on 40 on the number line and count back 20. What number are you on now?*



Playing with **money** is another way to learn about tens and units. *How many one cent coins equals a ten cent coin? I have 16 cents in my hand; how many 10 cent coins and how many 1 cent coins could I have?* Check out the video clip **Talking about money** for games with tens and units.

See www.ncca.ie/primaryparents for more information including video clips.