Early Start

Early start: Numeracy — A parent's guide

Long before children start school they begin to learn about numeracy. The experiences they have every day help them to develop their numeracy skills.

Numeracy is about having the confidence and skill to use numbers, time, money, patterns, shapes and measurement and other mathematical knowledge in all aspects of life such as for cooking, reading a map or bill, reading instructions and even playing sports.

The *Early Start* numeracy materials support teachers and schools to find out your child's early numeracy skills by using a series of tasks developed specifically for Queensland.

It is important to remember that the *Early Start* numeracy tasks are designed to gather information about students' abilities, and their learning needs, so teachers can plan effective learning programs during the early years of school. Don't be concerned if your child can't answer all of these questions. These tasks are designed to gather information about what your child knows and what needs to be taught next for their learning.

While schools do not report on *Early Start* results, teachers are able to provide you with feedback on how you can further support the development of your child's early numeracy skills.

What does your child do during the *Early Start* numeracy tasks?

From the start of Prep until the end of Year 2, your child will complete a series of *Early Start* numeracy tasks one-on-one with their teacher. These happen at the:

- beginning of Prep
- end of Prep
- end of Year 1
- end of Year 2.

Each set of tasks is designed to gather information about what your child knows and what they need to be taught next for their learning. Depending on whether your child is in Prep, Year 1 or Year 2, they may be asked to:

- count accurately
- recognise numbers
- recognise simple repeating patterns
- add and subtract small numbers of objects
- share items to show half and quarter
- tell the time for o'clock and half past
- calculate change in a money transaction.

Queensland
Government

Counting accurately

To find out how well your child can count, at the end of Prep, the teacher may say:

- 'Let's do some counting. Start counting from 4 and I'll tell you when to stop.'
- 'Can you count back from 24 and I'll tell you when to stop.'

At the end of Year 1, the teacher may say:

- 'Let's do some skip counting by fives. I'll start counting by fives and you keep going. 15, 20, 25….now you keep going.'
- 'Let's do some skip counting by twos. Start counting by twos from 11 and I'll tell you when to stop.'

Recognising numbers

To find out which numbers your child can identify at the end of Year 1, the teacher may show them three numbers and ask them to say each number.

E.g.   7   38   649

Recognising simple repeating patterns

To find out whether your child can recognise simple repeating patterns at the end of Prep, the teacher may create a pattern using a picture of a dog then three fish repeated three times. The teacher then gives your child extra dog and fish cards and says, 'Go on with this pattern.'

At the end of Year 1, the teacher may show a pattern of a series of five numbers with the second number missing, and ask your child, 'What is missing?'

E.g.   26   X   46   56   66

Adding and subtracting

To find out whether your child can add small numbers at the end of Prep, the teacher may show a picture of 12 dogs in a park and say, 'There are 12 dogs altogether. If six more dogs came, how many would there be altogether?'

Sharing items

To find out whether your child can share items to show half of a group at the end of Year 1, the teacher may place 12 pencils in front of them and say, 'Please share the pencils so that we have half each.'

Telling the time

To find out whether your child can tell the time for o'clock and half past at the end of Year 1, the teacher may show them a page of clock faces, with both analogue and digital displays, and say, 'Let's look at these clocks. Point to the clock that shows exactly 2 o'clock. Now point to the clock that shows exactly half past eight.'

Money

To find out whether your child can accurately calculate change in a money transaction at the end of Year 2, the teacher may show them a picture of a boy purchasing a book for $2.85 then say, 'If a boy pays for this book with a $5 note, how much change will he get?'