



Northern Territory Government



Learning Numeracy With Family

a smart Territory
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'I remember when I was younger my Aunty showed me how turtle eggs are found, dug and divided into groups of 5. She taught me the Yolngu way of counting them. Watching, listening and imitating parents and other family plays a very important role in our children's learning. Parents can demonstrate why maths is important. Remember parents, you are your children's first teachers.'

Yalmay Yunupingu.

Families as First Teachers
helping families helping children

Counting

Counting tells how many.

Ideas for families

- Count fingers and toes. “1, 2, 3, 4, 5 toes!”
- Count at the shop. Talk about how many things you have in the basket.
- Count the crayons as you draw with kids. “You have 2 crayons.”
- Count the fruit as you get ready to eat. “1,2,3,4,5 oranges.”



Matching

Kids learn that when things are the same they go together.

Ideas for families

- Collect sticks, stones, leaves or shells. Sort into different piles with kids. Match the ones that look the same.
- Play matching games using stones or colored bottle tops.
- When you give kids food on a plate, ask “Which ones are the same?”
- Put things that are the same into a container. Talk about things that are the same.



Big and Little

When kids hear and use the words 'big' and 'little' they are learning about size.



Ideas for families

- Talk about the things you see. “Look at that big cow with her little calf!”
- Play finding games with kids. “Can you find a big truck and a little car?”
- Talk to kids about size. “You can carry the little one.”
- Talk about size while you are out in the bush. “We need to find some big sticks for the fire.”



Learning Number Names

Kids learn the names of numbers by hearing and saying them.

Ideas for families

- Count with kids when you are playing with them.
- Sing songs with numbers using your fingers to count. “1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Once I caught a fish alive.”
- Count the steps when you walk up stairs. “1,2,3,4,5 steps.”
- Say the name of numbers when you see them.



Sharing

Kids learn about division by sharing.

Ideas for families

- Cut food into pieces and share it. Talk with kids about what you are doing.
- Talk to kids as you share fish, goanna or watermelon with family.
- Share out toys to play with. “One for you, one for me.”
- Talk to kids as you share lunch. “A sandwich for you, one for your brother and one for me.”



More

Use the word “more” to help kids learn about quantity.

Ideas for families

- Ask kids if they want ‘more’ at meal times.
- Pour some drink into a cup. Ask kids if they want more.
- Talk to kids as they play in the sand. “Put some more sand in the container.”
- Play with the hose and containers.

Shape

Learning about shapes helps kids describe things in their world.

Ideas for families

- Draw with kids. Talk about the different shapes you draw.
- Collect square or round plastic containers for kids to practice stacking. Talk about the shapes.
- Make shapes out of play dough. “This one is round.”
- Talk to kids about shapes when you eat. “Do you want a watermelon circle or a watermelon triangle?”



Sorting

Kids learn that things can be sorted into groups.

Ideas for families

- Talk about foods. Tell kids which foods come from the land and which come from the sea.
- Look at the different foods in the shop. “The meat is in the freezer and the fruit is in the fridge.”
- Talk with kids about people and family. Talk about moiety and skin names.
- Play with kids. “Put all the big shells together and the little ones in the middle.”

Patterns

Seeing patterns helps kids learn about order and what comes next.

Ideas for families

- Show kids the patterns in paintings. Talk about the different patterns.
- Talk to kids about patterns as you draw. “A big circle, then a little circle, then a big one again.”
- Make patterns in the sand with kids. Kids will make their own patterns.
- Talk about different patterns when you see them. “Look, there are animal tracks here.”



Full and Empty

Talking about 'full' and 'empty' helps kids learn about capacity.

Ideas for families

- Talk with kids as you get the billy ready. "The billy is empty. Let's fill it up."
- Play with water. Talk about full and empty.
- Play in the sand with kids. "The jug is empty! Now it's full."
- Talk to kids at meal times. "Your bowl is full."





Up, Down and Next To

Talking about up, down, and next to helps kids learn about position.



Ideas for families

- Look at the possum up in the tree. Look at the lizard down on the ground.
- Ask kids to put the cup up on the bench or put the mat down on the floor.
- Talk to kids about who is sitting next to them. “Grandma is sitting next to you.”
- Ask kids to help find things in the shop. “Can you get the Weetbix? It’s next to the Sultana Bran.”





In, Out, Over and Under

Talking about in, out, over and under helps kids learn about position.

Ideas for families

- Use everyday words to describe position. “Let’s all get in the pool now.”
- Talk to kids at the shop. “Let’s get the melon out of the fridge.”
- Talk to kids at the park. “Climb over the bar. Climb under the slippery dip.”
- Ask kids to help when you clean up. “Let’s put the rubbish in the bin.”





Heavy and Light

Learning about heavy and light helps kids understand mass.

Ideas for families

- Get kids to help at the shop. “I’ll carry the heavy bag and you can carry the light one.”
- Show kids the scales when you are at the clinic. “The scales show us how heavy you are.”
- Talk with kids as you play in the sand. “Can you pick up this heavy bucket of sand?”
- Talk with kids about everyday things. “That bag of oranges might be heavy.”



Time

Learning about time helps kids to understand when things happen.

Ideas for families

- Talk to kids about day and night. “The sun moves in the sky during the day and the stars come out at night.”
- Talk about seasons. “It’s the wet season now and the storms are coming.”
- Show kids a clock. “It’s 8 o’clock now and it’s time to go.”
- Show kids posters in community that tell us about time. “The clinic opens at 9 o’clock.”