**Mental maths activities to practice**

**1.Counting Forwards**

* Counting forwards and backwards starting from different points (not from one) 1-100
* Try to work on crossing the ‘10 number’ (10, 20, 30, 40 etc). For example, when going forwards – Say ‘*start at 8 and keep going until I say stop*’. Stop the child around 12/13, you want to see if they can cross from the 1s to the teens. Same applies with bigger numbers check if they can cross from the teens to the 20s, the 20s to the 30s etc.
* Number after
* ‘What number comes after 4?’ If they have to count all the way up to the number from one they could work on producing it quickly without having to count that - it’s a really important skill - start 1-10, 11-20,21-30 etc.

**2. Counting Backwards**

* Counting backwards (very important for subtraction) same as above try to start at all different numbers and see can the child cross over the 10, 20, 30, 40 etc. *Start at 13 and count backwards until I say stop’*
* Counting backwards is much harder for children (it’s like an adult trying to say the alphabet backwards...have a go!), so it takes longer to achieve fluency with it.
* Number before
* ‘What number comes before 8?’ If they have to count all the way up to the number from one they could work on that - it’s a really important skill - start 1-10, 11-20,21-30 etc.

NOTE

* *You are working on going from one group of 10s to the next forwards and backwards with fluency and ease.*
* *Stay within your child’s ability level – if they are struggling with the teens don’t go on to the 20s, 30s etc.*
* *Fluency in counting backwards and forwards from different starting points is really helpful for all aspects of your child’s maths*
* *If there is any before / after confusion just do one at a time - eg forwards counting and number after, next day - backwards counting and number before*

**3. Numerals**

* Written Numbers: Call out random numbers and ask your child to write them down – watch for the teens they can be tricky! (Start with 1-10, 11-20, 21-30 and so on).
* Identification: Show your child numbers on cards in random order in range 1-10. Don’t move on to next set of numbers (teens) until they know all 1-10 without hesitation. Continue with this sequence in to teens, 20s and so on.
* Sequencing: Show the cards one at a time in random order, ask children to tell you each number in turn as you show it to them and put the mixed up numbers in a row. Ask your child to make a new row underneath putting the numbers in the correct order starting from smallest (left to right) or largest (right to left).

**Please note:** Confusions are common and lots of children find areas such as the teens challenging, so lots of repetition would be really helpful to your child in learning their numerals.

**4.Finger patterns 1-10**

* *‘Show me 4 fingers on your hands*.’ Ask them to count and check. Ask them to show you all the ways to make 4 on their fingers (3+1, 2+2, 4+0 all can be turned the other way around aswell – 1+3, 0+4)
* Each time ask them to tell you how they made 4? You want them to say 2 and 2 makes 4 etc
* Don’t move on to the next number until they can show you all the combinations quickly and confidently. Continue up to 10
* Start with children able to see their fingers (in front of them or on the table). When they can, for example make 4 multiple ways while looking at fingers 2+2 etc, ask them to put hands on their heads like bunny ears so that they can’t see them, this is more challenging.
* Children may like to record all the ways they can make all the numbers (3 -10) by writing them down.

**Doubles Patterns 1-5:** Ask children ‘*Put your hands in front. Make two on your right hand. Make two on your left hand.* *Count to see how many you have altogether? One, two, three, four! Say after me – two and two makes four. This time, look at one hand and then the other hand while you say, two and two makes four.’*

* Repeat for three and three, four and four, five and five and one and one.
* When your child is confident and facile with doubles in range 1-5 move on to bigger doubles 6-10 (six and six, seven and seven etc).

**Doubles plus one:** *Put your hands on your head. Show me 2 and 2 on your fingers. What does 2 and 2 make? Put up one more finger. What do you have now? What does 2 and 3 make?*

* Similarly 3 and 3 (3 and 4), and 4 and 4 (4 and 5)

**Five Plus Patterns:** Child puts hands out in front (fingers seen). *Put your hands in front and make five on this hand and make one on the other hand. How many fingers have you raised altogether? Say after me five and one makes six.*

* Repeat for five and two, five and three, five and four, five and five.
* When your child is confident giving answers when they can see their fingers, ask them to work with their hands above their heads (bunny ears or fingers unseen).
* Whatever number you are focussing on in finger patterns do the same with cubes/ counters/ little toys anything you can find at home.
* For example, you are focussing on 5 - give them 5 little circles and a picture of a butterfly ask them to put some of the 5 circles on each wing.
* ‘How many do you have on each wing? 3 on this side and 2 on this side - ‘ what does that make ?’ 3 and 2 makes 5
* Show me that on your fingers
* Write it on the board/ page/ copy
* You could use a butterfly/ ladybird/ soccer pitch – anything with two sides
* Repetition of the same thing in different ways is great to consolidate the learning for your child.

**NOTE:**

* Repetition is important. Don’t be afraid of it, children need repetition.
* At first children will raise fingers one at a time and then progress to throwing up all the fingers they need simultaneously or at the same time.

**5.Patterns and sequences of sounds and movements**

* Copying and counting sequences of movements or sounds in the range 1-5, then extend to range 6-10 (hand chops, head nods, jumps, clapping, ball bouncing etc)
* Ask your child to count amount of movements / sounds.
* As your child to repeat back what they saw/ heard without counting out loud.

**5.Spatial Patterns**

* Domino/Dice Patterns: Use dice or domino pattern and ask the children to quickly tell you what they see ( you want them to recognise the pattern without having to count)
* Matching the patterns with a sound/movement. For example, show a three pattern, ask your child to clap 3 times or make the same 3 pattern in the air with their finger or tap out the same 3 shape and pattern on the table.
* Similarly repeat for 1-6 domino patterns
* Eventually you want to be able to flash a pattern to them really quickly and for your child to tell you straight away what number they’ve seen.
* Play loads of board games with your child to give them lots of opportunity to work with the dice patterns and become familiar with them.