

*size & shape*

Do you think that will fit? Or is it too small / big? Or the wrong shape?

# Jigsaw puzzles

(or cut up cards or photos)

EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*predicting*

What picture / colours will be on the piece that goes next to this one?

*shape & fit*

Can you see a piece that looks like this space? What shape will the piece be that fits here?



*fit & which way round?*

*predicting*

I wonder what it will look like when it is finished.

Oooh, shall we turn that around and see if it fits?

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*shape*

How many sticky out / in bits does the piece that we need have?

# Jigsaw puzzles

(or cut up cards or photos)

EARLY CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*shape & position*

I'm going to look for all the straight sided pieces to go around the outside



*shape & fit*

How do you know that piece is not the right one?

*shape & position*

Are there any pieces with corners? Where might they go?

*position & informal shape language*

I think we need a piece where the sticky out bits are opposite each other...can you find one?

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*comparing capacities*

Would you like  
this big jug or  
this small jug?

# In the bath

(or water play with a bowl,  
pool or sink)

EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*comparing capacities*

Let's pour all of  
the water from the  
yellow pot into this  
blue pot, what do  
you think might  
happen?



*capacity*

Let's see if one jug full  
will fill all these  
cups...

*volume*

Let's half-fill these ones so  
we can both have the  
same amount of 'drink'.

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*volume*

Can you fill it  
right up to the  
line?

# In the bath

(or water play with  
a bowl, pool or sink)

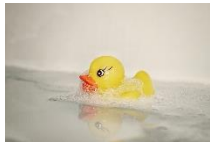
EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*capacity & comparison*

Which cup holds the  
most water do you  
think? How might we  
check?

*size & capacity*

This ladle is HUGE!  
It holds more than  
this cup!



*capacity*

If we keep on  
pouring, this will  
over-flow!

*how many & weight*

I wonder how many pebbles I  
can fit in my pot / tub before it  
sinks?

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*position*

The goat is under /  
on top of / behind /  
in front of / next to  
the bridge.

# Reading a book

EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*more*

This is a longer  
book, look at all  
the pages!



*predicting & sequencing*

What might happen  
next, do you think?

*height, fit & size*

I wonder if she'll be able  
to reach the top. I wonder  
if she will be able to hide  
behind the tree.

*numbers*

I think page 6 has a good picture...  
can you find it?

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# Reading a book

*direction & routes*

Let's retell the journey and remember what they passed on the way. Maybe we could draw a map?



*adding*

How many fish do you think we will see on the next page, if there is one more?

*counting & comparing*

I think there are more birds than butterflies in this picture, what about you?

*direction & routes*

Which way should the hen go to get to the hen house?

*time language*

What happened first / next / after / before that?

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*position*

What is next to  
the post office?

# Walking to the shops

*numbers*

Let's see who will be the  
first to see a number 3  
somewhere. I'm going  
to look on the cars and  
the doors.



*counting*

Let's count the  
steps!

*estimating*

I wonder - how many  
dogs we will see on the  
way to the shop today?

*direction & routes*

Which way do we go now?  
Which way next?

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*direction & routes*

You give me the directions today!

# Walking to the shops

*remembering routes*

Can you remember, what are we going to pass next? The post box or the garden gate where the dog lives?

*counting*

There are lots of lampposts on this street... can we count them all?



*direction & routes*

Here's the bus stop. Let's see which buses stop here and where they go. Look – there's a map.

*number order*

Some of these door numbers are missing ...

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*how many*

How many cars  
have you got  
altogether?

# Playing with toy vehicles and play people

EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*direction*

My car is going  
over / under /  
around the bridge.

*size*

Which do you think is  
the biggest / smallest  
car? Why do you think  
that?



*size & shape*

Can we make a car  
park / garage to fit  
these cars?

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*counting*

Here is a bus stop. Let's line up all the people to catch the next bus... it's late, there's a long queue. How many are waiting now?

# Playing with toy vehicles and play people

EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*perspective*

What can the driver of the silver car see?



*position*

Let's line up all the cars – where will the red car go? What about the blue one – maybe next to / behind / in front of the red car?

*length*

Which car goes furthest when we roll these down the ramp?

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*sharing*

Lots of cherries today! Lets share them all out.

# Making a snack

EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*counting or adding*

Oh no! We don't have enough. How many more do we need?



*comparing & how many*

How many would you like? 1 or 2?

*shape*

Would you like your toast cut into fingers or triangles?

*size*

Would you like the big spoon or the small spoon to eat that?

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*sharing & counting*

We have 10  
crackers to share  
fairly. How many  
will you each get?

# Making a snack

EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*counting*

How many  
bananas do you  
think we need if  
we all want one?



*shape*

Would you like a  
circular or rectangular  
biscuit?

*sharing & comparing*

Let's share them so we all have  
the same number.

*shape*

Let's cut it exactly in  
half / into two pieces.

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*counting*

1 sock, 2 socks!

# Getting dressed

EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*counting*

1, 2, 3, 4.  
4 poppers fastened up.



*size & pattern*

Are these your gloves or are they too small / big for your hands? Do they match?

*which way round?*

Oh no! It is upside down / inside out!  
Let's turn it around.

*position*

Your shoes need their buckles on the outside of each foot.

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*position*

Tights! Are the toes pointing forwards?

# Getting dressed

EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*counting backwards*

Let's count back as the zip goes down. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0.



*counting forwards*

Let's count as the zip goes up. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

*counting*

Vest, T-shirt, jumper – that's 3 layers on today! When you put on your coat it will be 4! If you take off your jumper it will be 2.

*position*

Right arm in, left arm in.

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*how many*

Candles! Whose birthday is it? How old are they? Have we the right number of candles so we can sing?

*counting / how many?*

How many pieces have you cut it into?

Let's share the dough so we all have the same amount. How shall we do that?

# Playing with dough



*volume*

*estimation & size*

How many biscuits do you think you can make with that cutter?

*length*

Who can make the longest worm with their dough?

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# Playing with dough

*how many*

How many holes  
you have made?

*how many*

How many cakes  
are in the tray?  
How many spaces  
do we have left?



*size & fit*

Which cutter will  
you choose to make  
more biscuits this  
time?

*patterned arrangements*

Can we make it the  
same on both sides?

*weight*

Here are the scales,  
let's weigh your cake.

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*size & which way round?*

This box of cereal is huge, we'll have to lie it down I think.

*weight*

Which of these is the heaviest?

# Putting away the shopping

EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*size, shape & fit*

Where shall we put the big bottle so it will fit?



*counting*

How many apples do we have? Let's count them as we put them in the bowl. 1, 2, 3. There are 3 apples in the bowl.

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# Putting away the shopping

*size*

This is a big potato!

*weight*

This box is heavy – can you lift it okay?



*counting*

1, 2, 3, 4.  
That's 4 cans of beans. Did we buy 4? Is that all of them?

*position*

Put the yogurt next to / on top of / in front of / behind the butter.

website



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*predicting*

Jump, hop, jump,  
hop, jump, hop,  
jump... what comes  
next?

# Pattern spotting

EARLY CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*pattern rules*

Oooh! There's a zigzag pattern on that wall paper, 'up, down, up down, up, down'. I can do it with my finger!

*noticing*

I can see a stripey pattern. What do you think I am looking at?



*reflection patterns*

That building has a window and a door on each side. They're the same but the other way around!

*patterned arrangements*

I'm having a biscuit with spots around the edge. Do you want one with spots around the edge or in the middle?

*predicting*

"Heads, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes. Heads shoulders knees and toes, knees and \_\_\_\_\_". a song with a pattern

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# Pattern making

*circle patterns*

I'm arranging  
the toys in a  
circle!



*lining up patterns*

I'm putting them in  
a line, all looking  
the same way.

*lining up patterns*

I'm using all  
the same  
bricks to  
make a tower

*fixing mistakes*

Which one's gone wrong?  
Can you fix it for me?

*size patterns*

I'm making a circle,  
inside a bigger circle,  
inside a bigger circle,  
inside an even bigger  
circle.

*noticing*

Oh, you've put them in a spiral!

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*fixing mistakes*

Can you spot my mistake?

*spotting what repeats*

Let's see - what is the repeating unit?

*copy*

Can you copy my pattern unit (e.g. red blue blue). Now let's make it again and again to make a long train that goes on and on, with this pattern.

*copy & continue*

Can you continue (carry on) my pattern?  
Can you copy my pattern? (underneath)

*finding the rule*

Can you tell me what the pattern is? (big small, red blue, or AB)

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# Pattern making

EARLY CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP



*making a pattern with 2 things*

Can you make up your own pattern with two things that repeat over and over?

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*pattern rules*

What is your pattern unit? What is the smallest part that repeats over and over?

# Pattern making

EARLY CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*pattern rules & mistakes*

Can you make up a pattern with a mistake for me to spot?

*copying (a new way)*

Can you do actions in the same pattern as your objects?



*copying (a new way)*

Can you make the same pattern but this time with different objects?

*border patterns*

Let's make your pattern go around a shape (circular plate, large triangle or square). Does your pattern 'work' and keep going round forever? Why / why not?

*continuing (in both directions)*

Can you continue your pattern to the left as well as to the right?

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*height*

I'm going to make a tall tower with the bricks

# Making plans

EARLY CHILDHOOD  
MATHS GROUP

*days of the week & pattern*

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday... over and over!



*how many & shape*

How many T-shirts do you think you need to take on holiday? Help me fold them.

*fit*

Help me pack your things in your bag. How will we make everything fit inside?

*sequencing*

Shoes on, then go outside.

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*direction & routes*

Which way shall we go? Around or through the park?

# Making plans

EARLY CHILDHOOD MATHS GROUP

*counting backwards*

It is five days until your birthday. Let's write the numbers and cross one out each day to countdown.



*days of the week & counting*

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday... 1,2,3, that's three days away.

*estimating*

I wonder - how many red cars will we see on our walk today?

*time language*

We'll have lunch first then go to nursery after.

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