

■ 'More' and 'less' are about comparing things



■ What we do and what it means

Dad: Ollie, there isn't any more spaghetti. Do you want some more sausages?

Ollie: No, I have enough. Look how many I got!

Knowing what 'more' and 'less' means helps children know how to compare different amounts.

Comparing different amounts is necessary for maths development because later children will be able to compare groups of things, counting which has more.

An Australian Government initiative, funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

■ 'Upside down' is about position and direction



■ What we do and what it means

Mum: The picture is upside down. Turn it around the other way.

When we talk about turning things around, moving things closer or state which way up something is, children are learning about the position of something.

Position (where something is) and direction (where they go) are key ideas in mathematics.

Later, children learn to pay attention to position, order and direction.

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■ 'Up', 'down' and 'next to' are about position



■ What we do and what it means

Mum: Down we go!

When we talk about 'up' and 'down', 'over' and 'next to', children are learning about the position of something.

Over time children learn that there are words (for example upside down, next to, behind) which describe position.

Later, children learn to pay attention to position, order and direction.

They are key ideas in mathematics.

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■ 'Top' and 'edge' are about area



■ What we do and what it means

Dad: Let's wipe the table together.

Using paper towels, the children wipe the table.

Dad: Did you wipe to the edge? We cover the whole surface!

When we talk about 'edge', 'top' and 'bottom', we can help children learn about area. Children often don't think about area. Helping children pay attention to it helps them later on when they will measure these surfaces and make comparisons.

An Australian Government initiative, funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

■ 'Straight', 'curved' and 'bent' are about shape



■ What we do and what it means

Ashraf: Look what I made. It's curved like a raindrop.

Using everyday words to describe shape such as 'a raindrop', 'egg shape', 'curved' and 'round' are important for helping children understand shape.

Over time children will use words such as 'triangle', 'square' and 'circle'. These words help children to talk about the shapes in their environment.

Noticing and studying shape is important for learning geometry later.

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‘Half here! Half over there!’ is about fractions



■ What we do and what it means

Grandad: Let's give the chickens some yummy yummy feed. Half here! Half over there!

Children hear words like 'half' or 'quarter' every day.

Having lots of experiences with splitting things into equal amounts helps children understand fractions later.

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- ‘Grouping things together’ is about noticing if something is the same or different



■ What we do and what it means

Mum: Adele, come and help Mummy with the laundry.

Adele picks up a sock.

Mum: Oh good. You've found the other one?

Children learn to group things together when they notice if something is the 'same' or 'different'.

Lots of experiences with 'same and different' help children later on with describing how something may be different (eg has three more), rather than just how things look.

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■ 'Sorting things' is about classifying



■ What we do and what it means

Jana: Where does this go?

Mum: That goes in the cupboard.

Jana: The oranges go in the fridge?

When we unpack the shopping we sort things as we put them away. Early on, children sort by what is 'the same' and 'what is different'. They may start by sorting colour and end up sorting by size.

Later, children keep using the same sorting system (classification) and can tell you how they sorted.

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■ 'Grouping' and 'matching' are about counting



■ What we do and what it means

Mum: How many friends are coming to the tea party?

Aaliya: Five!

Mum: How many cups do we need? Let's see if we have enough.

When friends play together they often group things, and ask 'How many are there altogether?'

Finding out how many there are of something helps children think about the group of things (and not just the last thing they counted).

Later children will understand that a number can represent a group of things and will trust that number, for example 5, will always represent a group of things.

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■ '1, 2, 3, 4, 5' is about learning number names



■ What we do and what it means

Mum: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 toes! (tickling each toe as she counts). You have 5 toes.

There are patterns in the way we say numbers and they help children to remember their order.

Children need to learn the order of the early number names by saying number rhymes and imitating the order they hear.

When the numbers begin to be repeated (21, 22, 23, 24 etc) children notice the pattern of the numbers so they can work out what number comes next.

When using number order to count objects children need to learn that the last number tells them how many.

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1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Numbers are about 'how much', 'how long' and 'how many'



■ What we do and what it means

Mum: We are supposed to put in 300 ml of milk.

Children will hear and see numbers being used to describe 'how much', 'how many' or 'how long'.

Knowing that numbers can be used in different ways is important for later learning in mathematics.

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■ 'High' and 'low' are about measurement



■ What we do and what it means

Camryn: I can jump so high!

Mum: Whee ... let's try and touch the sky.

Things can be higher or lower, thicker or thinner, smaller or larger. All of these are comparisons.

Later, children will learn to use centimetres (cm), kilograms (kg), degrees, etc to make comparisons.

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■ 'Big' and 'little' are about measurement



■ What we do and what it means

Mum: We are going to give the baby a bath. Could you fit into that bath, Charlotte?

Charlotte: No, I am a big girl.

Children hear and use words such as 'bigger', 'smaller', 'taller' or 'thinner'.
They are important for learning about measurement.

Later, when children are older, they use centimetres (cm), kilograms (kg) and degrees to measure and compare more accurately, or to find out 'how much more'.

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■ 'Full' and 'empty' are about measurement



■ What we do and what it means

Mum: We need two cups of plain flour. We'll fill the cup right to the top.

Tommy: I can do it.

Filling a measuring cup helps children think about measurement. Words such as 'full', 'half a cup' and 'empty' help children pay attention to measurement.

Later, children will learn that measuring how much is about capacity, and will use words such as litres (l) or millilitres (ml).

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■ 'Heavy' and 'light' are about mass



■ What we do and what it means

Mum: Is this too heavy for you?

Adele: I can carry it. It's only little.

When children are lifting and carrying things they will talk about 'heavy and light', and 'big and small'.

Later, they will notice that the biggest thing is not always the heaviest or the smallest thing not always the lightest. Having lots of experience like this helps children understand about 'mass' (how dense something is).

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'Sharing' is about division



■ What we do and what it means

Mum: Can you share out the cake for the toys?

Aaliya: One for you, and one for you, and one for you ...

Children will share out by saying 'one for you' and 'one for you' until nothing is left.

Later, children will learn that sharing out is about division and will know what to do with the 'left over'.

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