



# Zoo animal maths

Using your child's own toys, including other animals, dinosaurs, cars etc. will engage and interest your child, they will want to count. They are also great for sorting, counting, and doing simple adding/taking away. They can also be combined with sand, water, gloop, dough, and any other material to make wonderful games!

This can be done indoors and outdoors. When you have finished your maths activity, leave them available for free imaginative play. You can even make simple boards or playmats with fields and paths.

## Using animal sets in free play

Make sure the animal sets have more than one of each animal to encourage sorting, counting, grouping, and sharing. If you have fences or bricks to build enclosures use these so they can create their own zoo or farm.



## Numbers as labels and for counting

Make a zoo, farm or wherever your child would like the animals to live. Label them- for example enclosure 1.

Sort the animals into sets- using your child's own ideas for sorting- they will often be more imaginative.

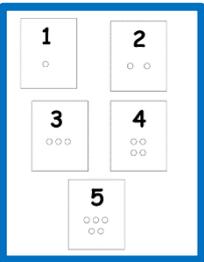
Use some number cards and a bag. Let your child choose a card and ask them to add the animals or take that number of animals out of enclosure.



## Calculating (adding/ taking away)

Build or draw a simple field. Collect some zoo animals. Make some number cards, with spots on, they will be able to count the spots if they do not recognise the number and it will help them make the link between counting and what the numbers mean, also write add/ take away on them. Get them to pick a card and they do what the card says, add or take away that number of animals.

This could then develop into a game. You both have a field. Place the number cards face down and take it in turns to choose one, adding or taking away animals as you go. The winner is the first to fill their field with 5/10 animals.



## Shapes, space, and measure

Cut out some simple shapes (squares, circles, rectangles, triangles initially add more difficult shapes later when they are confident with these) and encourage them to make pictures of animals or whatever they are interested in.

Play a position game with toy animals on a play mat or using something your child has built with bricks. Give instructions such as, "Put the lion next to the giraffe." "Put the bear behind the tree." "Put three cows under the bridge."

