Helping with Change from a Pound: A Guide for Parents

Key points

- In Year 2, children learn to work out how much change is left from £1 when they buy something – a practical maths skill they'll use for life.
- The key strategy is 'counting up' from the cost to £1, rather than taking away – it's usually easier and matches how real shops work.
- This builds on subtraction and mental maths children already know, so it feels like applying skills they've already got.
- Children learn to spot helpful starting points (like the nearest 10p) to make the counting simpler and quicker.
- Everyday chat about coins and change, without pressure or testing, helps children see why this matters beyond the classroom.

Things to try at home

- Play 'till' with toy coins or real coins: pretend to buy things from around the home for 20p, 35p or 50p, and work out the change together by counting up to £1 on your fingers.
- When you're out shopping, point out the price and say "If that costs 65p and you pay with £1, how much change?" – then let your child count up alongside you without rushing.
- Use a number line drawn on paper (0 to 100) or a ruler, and count up in tens and ones to show the jumps from the cost to 100p (£1).
- Play board games or card games with money to keep numbers fun and familiar – even simple games with 1p, 5p and 10p coins help.

Find out more

- Ask your child's teacher how they're teaching change – they can show you the exact method the class uses, so you're doing the same at home.
- The National Curriculum for mathematics (available on the Department for Education website) sets out what Year 2 children are expected to learn about money.
- Your school's website or prospectus often has details about how maths is taught, including any resources or games they suggest for home.