

Subtraction in Reception: Take Away and Finding the Difference

Key points

- Subtraction in maths (the study of numbers) can mean two different things: taking items away or comparing two groups.
- The 'take away' model is when you start with a group and some items are removed.
- The 'difference' model is when you look at two separate groups to see how many more are in one than the other.
- Children learn best when they can see and touch objects, like buttons or pasta shapes, to help them understand these ideas.
- Every child learns at their own pace, and your child's teacher can tell you which model they are focusing on in class.

Things to try at home

- Play 'disappearing snacks' by putting a few pieces of fruit in a bowl and seeing how many are left after someone eats one.
- Line up two different towers of Lego bricks side by side to see which is taller and count the extra bricks to find the difference.
- While tidying up, ask how many toys are left in the box after you take a few away to put on a shelf.
- Use your fingers to show two different numbers and see who has more, then count the gap between them.

Find out more

- Your child's class teacher
- The GOV.UK website for National Curriculum guidance
- Your school's parent handbook or newsletter