Months of the Year: Learning the Order and Why the Calendar Matters

A gentle guide to help your child in Year 1 (the first year of primary school after Reception) learn the twelve months of the year, the order they follow, and how they link to the seasons.

What is learning the calendar?

In Year 1, children begin to explore how we measure time. While they spend a lot of time on numbers, learning the months of the year is an important part of their wider learning. This involves understanding that a year is made up of twelve months that always follow the same order. It helps children make sense of the world around them, allowing them to understand when things happen and how to plan for the future. Because every child's experience of time is different, schools introduce this in a way that connects the calendar to their own lives and the changing world.

What happens in the classroom?

Your child will learn to recite the months in the correct order, from January through to December. They will explore the four seasons—spring, summer, autumn, and winter—and see which months belong to each. Teachers often use hands-on activities to make this real; for example, children might sort themselves into groups based on their birthday month. They will also practice answering simple questions, such as 'Which month comes after March?' or 'Which month comes before October?'. These activities help them move from simply repeating a list to truly understanding the sequence of the year.

What this means for your child

Learning the calendar helps your child develop a sense of 'chronology', which is just a fancy word for putting events in the right time order. This is a key skill in maths and other subjects. For children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) or those learning English as an additional language, this can be a wonderful way to use visual aids and routines to feel more secure about their school day and year. It gives them the vocabulary to talk about their lives and the confidence to navigate a school timetable.

Simple ways to help at home

You don't need to do any formal drilling or lessons. Instead, try weaving the months into your daily chat. You could point to a calendar on the wall and ask, 'What month are we in now?' or 'How many months until your birthday?'. If you have our printable months wheel, you can spin it together as a game. Talking about the weather is also a great way to link months to seasons—for example, noticing the leaves falling in October. Keep it light, playful, and short to keep it fun for your child.

Common questions

Parents often ask if there is a 'right' way to teach this. The best way is usually through repetition and real-life examples. You might wonder if your child should be able to spell every month perfectly; at this stage, the focus is more on the order and the concept of time than on complex spelling. If you are unsure about the specific activities your child is doing in class, your child's teacher is the best person to ask, as every school may approach the topic slightly differently.

Sources

- Department for Education, National Curriculum in England: Mathematics programmes of study
- GOV.UK, National Curriculum in England: Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage