

Case Study

Learn Hillingdon, Adult Community Education

Learn Hillingdon offers courses for adults and families throughout the year in West London. Courses are delivered out in the community and at the adult education centres. Below, we share details about their creative and fun workshops incorporating maths that took place during half-terms.

Family maths learning through pumpkin carving and other activities

Under Multiply funding (the national scheme for increasing adult numeracy) Learn Hillingdon delivered successful and fun pumpkin-themed learning sessions for 44 adults and 62 children aged 5 to 13 during October half terms in 2023 and 2024. Carina Cross, Programme Manager, reported that parents and children enjoyed themselves so much that they didn't realise it was maths they were doing until it was pointed out!

How was maths made fun?

Learn Hillingdon integrated maths into activities like:

- weighing the pumpkins before and after carving, then recording and comparing the difference
- measuring the circumference of the pumpkins using tape measures and recording their findings (also calculating the average circumference of the pumpkins)
- following a sequence of instructions (carving the pumpkins to take out and roast the seeds.

All children (and adults!) were actively engaged in the session and came together when comparing measurements and weights. Cooking is a great family maths activity that also involves literacy to follow a recipe. Families were given a recipe for making roasted pumpkins seeds, with food waste bags to take the seeds home. This activity also embedded principles of healthy eating and environmental sustainability by using the seeds after carving the pumpkins.

What did the families say?

Comments on the evaluation forms revealed that all the families agreed the sessions had met their expectations with many stating it had exceeded them!

- One parent said: "My daughter gained confidence."
- Another explained that: "My son really enjoyed weighing and measuring the pumpkin. His dexterity improved whilst using the carving tools"
- Another parent commented: "Due to the session being such a fun activity the children didn't realise they were doing maths!"