



PARENT TIMES

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discovering math at home

Children are naturally intrigued by math. Counting, sorting, putting things together, taking others away are all ways they find out about the world around them. Properly supported, their early explorations will set the stage for lifelong interest in math. Just what can we do as parents to help our children in this important area?

Make Math Concrete

Young children learn actively by doing, touching, experimenting. Reading and writing numbers, counting, adding and subtracting should be linked to concrete objects. Children need a great deal of practice with real things to fully grasp these basic ideas in math. Worksheets are only appropriate when used in a limited fashion after a child understands the concept behind what she is doing.



Keep Expectations Appropriate

Children learn at different rates and in their own unique ways. Observe your child to see what math concepts he already understands. Next think about what you can do to extend what he knows a little bit at a time. Does your three-year-old put two groups of toys together and figure out how many she has? Is your five-year-old writing numbers? (Reversing numbers is perfectly normal in kindergarten and even first grade). Ask your child's teacher for more information about what to expect at each age.

Have Fun With Math

Take advantage of little opportunities that occur throughout the day to count, sort, add, subtract, read or write numbers. Your child will enjoy exploring math with you if you keep the mood light and don't push too hard. Work together to figure things out.

- ✘ How many blocks are on the top level of her latest creation?
- ✘ How many in the whole thing?
- ✘ What if we put daddy's blue socks with his black ones, how many will we have?
- ✘ If there are ten toys on the floor and we put two of them away, how many will we still be tripping over?
- ✘ Can we count down as we put the rest away?
- ✘ How much do those apples in the grocery store cost?
- ✘ Do they cost more or less than the oranges?

Try some of these ideas and soon you and your child will see math all around you!—*By Marie Sloan*