

Thinking About Numbers

To do well in math, students need to understand how numbers work together.

While it's important to learn that $6 + 4 = 10$, it is even more important for students to understand that if you put a group of 6 blocks together with a group of 4 blocks, you will have 10 blocks—and that a group of 3 blocks and 7 blocks is also 10 blocks.

Young children often learn math concepts best using objects such as blocks or beads. (You may have heard teachers refer to these kinds of items as *manipulatives*.) Using objects to show how numbers work together will help give your child a strong foundation in math. And this foundation will make it much easier for your child to learn more complex math concepts later on.

If you are looking for more ways to help build math skills at home, talk to your child's teacher. *When parents and teachers work together, great things can happen.*

Your support and involvement are key to your child's success in school!



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Building Math Skills

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Building Math Skills



Numbers, Groups, and Shapes



Shapes and Groupings

Help your kindergartener learn basic shapes. Also practice grouping and sorting items so that your child will understand that objects can be put into categories.

- ▶ Sort Legos or blocks by shape or color.
- ▶ Have a "treasure hunt" in which your child tries to find objects of a particular shape or color around the house.
- ▶ Match socks or put coins into categories (pennies, nickels, quarters, etc.).

Math Vocabulary

Learning math vocabulary is an important part of kindergarten math.

- ▶ Talk about equal, same, and different. "What's different about these two flowers?"
- ▶ Play "Simon Says" to practice positions. "Simon Says put the book behind your back." (under your chin, over your head...)
- ▶ Look for opportunities to discuss relative terms such as more, less, bigger, smaller, lighter, heavier, taller, shorter, longer, etc. "Which of these glasses has more juice?"



Building Math Skills

A strong foundation in math will help your child succeed in elementary school and beyond.

Kindergarteners spend a good deal of time in school learning about numbers. They also learn about shapes, and how to sort and group items.

As your child works on math skills and concepts in school, there are a number of things you can do at home to further develop your kindergartener's math skills.

The math activities presented in this guide take very little time, and they're easy for any parent to do. *Be sure to always make math activities such as these playful and fun!*

Math skills build on top of each other, which is why students need to master one skill before going on to the next—and why it is so important for young students to develop a strong math foundation.

Look for numbers in everyday life

Increase your child's interest in math by showing that numbers are all around us.

- ▶ As you drive around town, point out the numbers you see on buildings, billboards, and road signs.
- ▶ Talk about the numbers you see on household items (e.g., calendars, cereal boxes, clocks).

Involve your child

Throughout the day, look for opportunities to count items and use numbers.

- ▶ Ask your child to bring you a specific number of objects, such as four spoons or five cups.
- ▶ Have your child count the carrots on his/her plate, the coins in your wallet, or the socks coming out of the dryer. Before eating a bag of M&Ms, count how many there are of each color.
- ▶ Purchase "color by number" and "connect the dots" coloring books.
- ▶ Have your child help you while grocery shopping. "Help me find a bunch of six bananas."
- ▶ When you see or talk about a number, ask what number comes next. "We're reading page 11. What number comes after 11?"

Play math games with your child

Playing games is a great way to learn math, and it's fun for everyone.

- ▶ Play board games that require moving a number of spaces, or card games such as "Go Fish."
- ▶ Take part in games that require counting or scoring (e.g., throwing balls into a basket).

Talk about numbers that matter

Relating numbers to things important in your child's life makes numbers more meaningful.

- ▶ Use the bathroom scale to measure your child's weight. "Let's see how much you weigh."
- ▶ Make a chart showing your child's height. "You've grown two inches this year!"
- ▶ Use a calendar to count the days until a special event. "Let's count how many days there are until it's your birthday."

By the end of the year, your child should be able to count to 100, write numbers up to 20, and give you the "next number" for numbers from 1 to 100.