



Comparing and Contrasting: Are they the Same or Different?

Helping your child learn math skills by comparing and contrasting will help your child strengthen his ability to look at things and figure them out. With your help these skills we give him a firm foundation in math when he starts school.

INFANT:

- Talk with your baby. Use words like soft/hard or bumpy/smooth (opposites) to talk about different objects. For example, "What a soft blanket you have!" "The ball is smooth. It rolls!" "That rattle feels bumpy, doesn't it?"
- Help your child to learn "cause and effect" with toys that squeak, rattle, light up, or play music when they are handled.
- Hide a toy under a blanket and let your baby find it.

TODDLER:

- Go on a "Texture Hunt." Help your child find different textures (soft/hard, bumpy/smooth, etc.) in your home. Be creative about where you find textures: a bumpy sponge, a soft towel, a soft pillow, a hard table. Have your child talk about each texture. Ask: "What does this feel like to you?"
- Help your child compare things. Find leaves with your child and arrange them from smallest to biggest. Help your child arrange her books on the shelf from tallest to shortest.
- Use finger paints. Make prints of your child's hands and your hands. Ask your child, "What's the same about our handprints? What's different?"

PRESCHOOLERS:

- Play the Question Game with your child! Ask questions that use compare words like short/tall, fast/slow, more/less, wide/narrow, heavy/light, far/near, or now/later. Ask: "Is your book bag heavy or light?" "Is our car going faster or slower than the blue car?" "Which of those trees is taller?" "Which of us has more cereal?"
- Put everyday objects (measuring cups, balls, or a coin) into water and watch whether they float or sink. Help your child to predict which objects will float and which will sink.
- Make a weather chart. Every morning look outside the window with your child. Ask: What do you see? Is it sunny, rainy, or cloudy? Draw a sun, clouds, or raindrops on a piece of paper with the word underneath. Let your toddler help by coloring and drawing with you. Post each day's forecast and talk about the week's weather on Friday. Can your child remember the weather words?