



Help Your Child To Learn About Numbers and Patterns!

Your child has been learning math every day of her life. That's because math involves things that we all do naturally each day: counting, seeing patterns, and solving problems.

Mathematical thinking is one of the skills your child will need in order to be ready to start school. And many of the ordinary things you do with him every day, from infancy through preschool, will help to build these abilities. You'll be preparing your child to do well in school when you help him at home to:

YOUR INFANT:

- Hug, snuggle, kiss and talk to your baby. Stimulating your baby's senses prepares her for the kind of thinking that will help her learn to solve problems later.
- Read together in Spanish or English, with baby in your lap. Use sturdy picture books with pages that are easy to handle. Read the words, talk about the book, and point to the pictures. Use simple, short sentences.
- Play with your infant with toys that squeak, rattle, light up, or play music when they are handled. These help teach your baby "cause and effect." With a rattle, for example, let your baby look at it and touch it. Show the baby how you shake it to make sounds. Pull toys, and toys with safe parts for baby to fit together, also help a child learn.
- Roll a softball or a block to your baby for watching, reaching and grasping.

YOUR TODDLER:

- Let your toddler play with safe objects of different shapes, colors and sizes. Help him place plastic mixing bowls inside one another, wash plastic dishes, or stack cans, boxes or blocks.
- Talk with her about the colors, textures, and shapes you see around you: an orange square of cheese, a white oval egg, a pear-shaped light bulb.
- Count the stairs as you take your child up for bed.

YOUR PRESCHOOLER:

- Make reading a part of every day. Choose books in English or Spanish that help your child to count or sort.
- Make an obstacle course with things to go over, under, through, and around. Talk with your child about which obstacles she goes "over," which she goes "under," and so on.
- Hide several familiar objects in a bag or box. Try to tell what they are by feeling with hands. No looking!
- Have a set of foam rubber numbers, letters, or shapes to play with in the bathtub. Play a game where your child gets to play with each one after he names it – with your help. Or ask him to sort them by color or shape.
- Sit down with a set of plastic measuring cups and spoons and a tub or pail of water. Let your child fill the cups and spoons with water and play with them as you talk about how they work. Ask questions: Which cup fills the tub the fastest? Why?

ParentTips is a monthly resource for parents with young children.
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