

# Supporting Math Skills at Home

Math skills are important to a child's success in school and in everyday life. Research shows that when children understand basic math skills they can use those skills to build knowledge of deeper mathematical concepts that will help them be successful in math in later grades. Here are a few ways you can help your child develop mathematical concepts at home.

**Attitude is everything!** Start by always being positive about math.

- ★ Tell your child that **everyone** can learn math.
- ★ Tell your child that **you** think math is important and fun.
- ★ Point out the ways in which different family members use math in their jobs.
- ★ Try to avoid saying "I'm not good at math" or "I never liked math."
- ★ Encourage your child to be persistent when solving problems, even if the problems are not mathematical in nature.
- ★ Praise your child when he or she solves a problem.

**Make math a part of your child's daily life.** Include your child in common activities that involve math such as:

- ★ Making purchases at the store
- ★ Measuring ingredients for a meal
- ★ Counting out plates and utensils for dinner
- ★ Sorting laundry

**Puzzles and games.** Play games and complete puzzles with your child. Puzzles and games help encourage critical thinking skills that are necessary for the development of many math skills.

**Count everything!** Count toys, kitchen utensils, and items of clothing as they come out of the dryer. Help your child count by pointing to and moving the objects as you say each number out loud. Count forwards and backwards from different starting places. Use household items to practice counting and sorting.

**Counting rhymes and books.** Classic rhymes such as "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe" and "Five Little Monkeys" make learning to count – both forwards and backwards – fun for children. Counting books capture children's imagination through the use of pictures. There is a suggested book list at the end of this document.

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**Explore the ways in which numbers are used in and around your home.** Take your child on a "number hunt" in your home or neighborhood. Point out how numbers are used on the TV, microwave, and telephone. Locate numbers in books and newspapers. Look for numbers on signs in your neighborhood. Encourage your child to tell you whenever he or she discovers a new way in which numbers are used.

**Ask your child to help you solve simple problems involving numbers in your home.**

- ★ "We need six bananas to make banana bread, and we have only two. How many more do we need to buy?"
- ★ "We have two bathrooms and each bathroom has two towels, how many towels do I need to wash?"
- ★ "Two guests are coming to dinner tonight. How many more plates will we need?"

## **Books to Support Math Skills**

- *Chicka Chicka 123* by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault
- *10 Black Dots* by Donald Crews
- *One Big Building* by Michael Dahl
- *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins
- *Round is a Mooncake* by Rosanne Thong
- *Mouse Shapes* by Ellen Stoll Walsh
- *Mouse Count* by Ellen Stoll Walsh