



The Smarter Preschooler

May 2010 Newsletter

Building Math Skills

As parents, we know how important reading is for children but often we neglect to focus on activities that develop math skills. However, we can easily incorporate teaching math skills to our preschoolers into our busy day.

Play is a great way to develop math skills in young kids. Kids can learn to count with their toys as parents count out teddy bears or toy cars. Children may be taught shapes as they make an oval train track or a house with rectangular shapes. Youngsters may also learn about money skills if parents use play money and a toy register. Additionally, any type of building toys such as building blocks or Legos can develop spatial ability which is a type of math skill.

Parents can also teach math skills through everyday chores. Engage your child when cooking and you can develop counting skills, addition and learn measurements. When doing the laundry, you may develop your youngsters classification skills when your child helps you sort and match the clothing. When clipping coupons with your child you can teach him or her about the value of money. If you garden, you can teach your child about measurements when laying out the spacing for the seeds.

Dad, too, can be enlisted to help teach math skills when doing projects around the house. For example, when assembling a cabinet he can teach a son or daughter sequential thinking skills or when woodworking a dad may teach math skills like measuring, adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Of course make sure that the working area is safe for the kids. You may want to buy a set of play tools for a young builder to work right along side of you.

When out and about, you can teach math skills to your child. For example you may point out numbers on street signs when driving. At the grocery store, you may discuss cost of individual items with younger kids and for older kids discuss per unit cost or addition and subtraction. By comparing prices your child learn the relative value of things.

Any time throughout the day, use math language. For example:

- Counting - "Let's put 3 teddy bears on the bed."
- Shapes - "Let's move this track over here to make an oval."
- Measurement - "Which one of these sticks is longer?"
- Volume - "Which bucket will hold more sand?"
- Weight - "Which basket is lighter?"

- Ordinal - "You can have a drink first, your sister second, and I will go third."
- Distance - "Which playground is nearer? farther?"
- Opposites - "The dog was wet but now he is dry."
- Money - "This is a penny, nickel, dime..."
- Fractions - " I will cut this cookie in half"

Play a variety of card and board games which develop counting skills, strategy, spatial ability and deductive reasoning. Some board games such as Hi-Ho Cherry 'O are designed specifically for the young player while others such as Monopoly Junior or Clue Junior are adaptations of the classics. You can find many popular games at discount stores like Target or Walmart. Specialized toy stores and homeschooling catalogues offer an even greater array of games that can develop specific math skills.

Jigsaw puzzles too can help improve spatial abilities in math. Puzzles vary in complexity and are appropriate for all ages. Start with 25 piece puzzles for younger preschoolers and move to greater number pieces as child matures.

Sign your kids up for group music classes such as Music Together or Kindermusik. They help prepare young children for future piano lessons. And research suggests a correlation between piano and higher math abilities.

Resources

Sample Math Books for Preschoolers

Best Book Parade by Stuart Murphy

The Silly Story of Goldie Locks and the Three Squares by Grace Maccarone

Sites

<http://www.kindermusik.com/>

<http://www.musictogether.com/>

Miscellaneous News

This month we won the Bronze in Living Now Book Award, and we were finalists in the Indie Excellence Awards and the Arizona Book Publishing Awards.

On June 26, 10:30 - 12:00 we will be giving a seminar on play and learning at the Children's Museum of Phoenix located at 215 N. 7th Street, Phoenix, AZ. Their phone 602.253.0501 It will be nine dollars for nonmembers and free for members.

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