

MONTHLY MESSAGE: The Building Blocks of Math

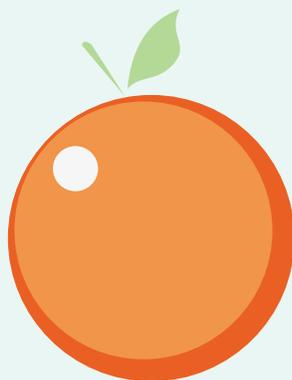
For children, learning math isn't just about learning numbers. Shapes, music and words develop early math skills too. Sorting a basket of fruit into two groups of apples and oranges is a skill that prepares children for learning math later in life.

A child's math ability in the preschool years through 5th grade is shaped by parent-child interactions. Talking to your child using numbers helps show that they are important. Children learn math can be used for many purposes from baking to shopping. There are lots of opportunities for you to speak in "number talk" with your child. Number talk can happen when counting out loud to 10 at the start of a game of hide and seek. For your preschooler, talking about sets of four or more items is better than smaller sets of one to three items. For example, instead of counting the number of strawberries on a plate one by one, you can say "There are eight strawberries on your plate." Some skills that are helpful for your child to know before kindergarten are counting up to 30, sorting objects and counting sets of objects up to 10.

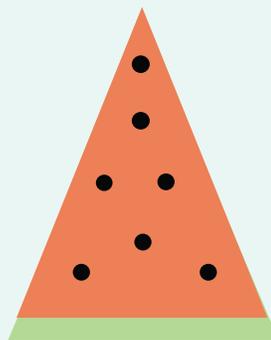
Teaching math shouldn't feel like a quiz. For children, learning and fun go together. Music and movement activities are a natural way to introduce math to young children by teaching patterns. The classic nursery rhyme song "Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed" has a repetitive beat and the number of monkeys decreases every verse. It's also fun for kids to jump along to.

Shapes are another fun way to build math skills. Children usually sort objects into groups by color and shape. They learn to notice if things are the same or different. This skill of comparison is important for math later on. Try putting a handful of change on the table. Ask your child to sort them into groups. Help him or her put all the dimes together, pennies together or nickels together. It is not important for your child to know the coin name or value.

Math is everywhere! Go on a "shape hunt" in your home. Look for specific shapes or name all the different shapes you see in each room.



Circle



Triangle

NOTES	

Rectangle

Did you know children have math milestones? As they grow, they learn ideas that become the building blocks of math. The milestones below are some common skills children develop at each stage. Every child develops at different speeds and ages. Use this as a guide to help build your child's skills.

- Understand the idea of "more" and enough."
- Understand the words "one" and "two" and can follow simple directions like "take one."
- Say number words in order but may mix up higher numbers.
- Can match same-size shapes with each other.
- Stack three or more blocks together.
- Play with simple picture puzzle pieces.
 - Explore quantity by filling and spilling containers with sand and water.

Age 1-2

- Recognize and name shapes with different sizes.
- Can draw shapes from memory after looking at it for several seconds.
- During second half of fourth year, some children can name the days of the week, months and seasons.
- By the end of the fourth year, some children can measure an object by using other smaller objects (measure the length of a book using paper clips lined up end to end).
- Can count up to five items, some can count to 10 and a few can count to 20.

Age 4

- Three year olds can tell you their age and hold up fingers to show the number.
- Can compare two different objects side by side.
- Can describe the steps in a simple routine like taking a bath(fill tub with water first, add bubbles, etc.).

Age 3

- Can use directional words correctly in a sentence (up, down, front, back, under, behind, between).
- Look at different-sized containers of the same shape and tell which holds more or less.
- Can sort a group of items by one or more characteristics (sorting socks in the laundry).
- With help from an adult, they can understand simple graphs and use the information to answer a question (if looking at a bar graph of common family pets, they can figure out which one was the most popular pet).
- Given two numbers between one and 10, many can tell you which one is larger.

Age 5

Visit
kyfamilymath.org
for game and activity
ideas for your
preschooler