



Math Article One

These ideas are gathered from www.scholastic.com in an article titled, “The 10 Best Ways to Help Your Kindergartener Succeed in School: A Parent’s To-Do List”, written by Ann E. LaForge; and from “How to Build School Success at Home”, published by Resources For Educators, Inc.

Whether it’s after school, on weekends, or during the summer, you can help your child become more successful in school. Right in your own home and neighborhood are hundreds of things to do that will get your child excited about learning. Many of them can be done as you go about your normal routines—buying groceries, preparing meals, and putting your kids to bed.

At home, the best way to help your child learn to love math is to play with numbers, and to frequently point out the various ways in which math makes our lives easier. By working with tangible objects, and counting, sorting, estimating, measuring, looking for patterns, and solving real-life problems, children learn to think in mathematical terms.

Almost anything you do that involves numbers and/or problem solving will build your child’s math skills. Here are just a few ideas to get you started:

- When your child is young, put her counting ability to work. Let her count out forks, napkins, plates, cups, and the number of people having dinner.
- Give your child practice in sorting things like silverware, blocks, laundry, and money.
- Post a running countdown of the days until his birthday. Let him change the number each day.
- Many children’s games involve counting and problem solving. Some good choices are *Bingo* (number identification); *Yahtzee* (addition practice); *Monopoly* (practice changing money); *Checkers*, *Parcheesi*, *Uno*, and *Chinese Checkers*, and traditional card games like *War* (more/less). For younger children, two long-time favorites are *Chutes and Ladders* and *Candy Land*. They’re simple, but they teach counting and following rules. When you play with your children, they are more likely to play “by the rules” and argue less.
- Play a copycat game, where one person creates a pattern (pat your head, touch your knee, clap three times) and the other person has to repeat the pattern three times in a row.
- Have your child compare things: Which do you think is heavier—a cookie or ten chocolate chips? Who do you think is taller, mom or dad? Which carrot is longer? Fatter? Crunchier?
- Ask your child to measure things in non-traditional units. For example: Let’s see how many footsteps it takes to get from here to the door. Why do you think it’s more for you and fewer for me? How many action figures (or Barbie dolls) long is this table?
- Challenge him to guess at things, and then find the answers. For example: How many bowls of cereal do you think we can get out of this box? How many M&Ms do you think are in your (snack size) bag? How many minutes do you think it will take to clear off the table? Which of these cups do you think will hold more juice?
- Give your child problems to solve—and let her work them out by touching and counting actual objects. For example: I have four cookies here, but two people want to eat them. How many should each person get? If we invite six kids to your birthday party, and put two candy bars in each kid’s treat bag, how many of candy bars will we need?
- The kitchen is a great place to get math practice, especially when you measure ingredients: “I need half a cup of raisins and one cup of flour.” Dividing food into equal portions is a good way to teach fractions.

Research has shown us that children do a much better job in school when parents get involved and show an interest in learning.