

January 2008

THEME: MATH

Did you know that playing in the sand, stacking blocks and stringing beads are way more than ordinary play activities? They also promote important math skills for young children. Through sand play, children are able to explore concepts like weight, measurement and mass by filling up buckets and other containers with sand, then moving them around. A block center gives children the opportunity to work on spatial relationships, classification and sorting. When handling, testing and choosing block shapes to build with, children are working on these foundational mathematical concepts. And stringing beads allows children to work on patterning, sorting and one-to-one number correspondence. Provide children with multiple colors and shapes of beads so they can sort and pattern in many different ways. These are just a few activities that extend math learning during a child's day.

Young children are surrounded by exciting mathematical concepts every day in their environment! Keep your eye out for strategies you could use to incorporate math into daily activities. Taking action to engage young children in math experiences will help them develop a solid foundation in the critical math skills they will build on for the rest of their life!

DOING ACTIVITIES EXTENDS THE LEARNING

Physical Development: Allow children to experience plenty of hands-on activities that encourage math skills. Playground games such as follow the leader and hopscotch promote gross motor skill development while working on rote counting, one-to-one correspondence and following directions. Allow children access to sand or water play with a variety of containers for them to use. Work on a child's fine motor skills by having them sort small toys by shape or color. Help children create patterns by beading or using blocks.

Language/Literacy: Use mathematical language to build a child's vocabulary and understanding of concepts. Expose children to vocabulary such as *how many*, *more than*, and *less than* and use terms like this in your everyday language. And be on the lookout for opportunities to bring math into activities. Have children help measure ingredients while you're cooking. During a trip to the grocery store, you can help children count apples to purchase, use the scale in the produce section and count how many eggs are in a dozen.

Social/Emotional: Spend some quality time nurturing relationships through hand rhymes and finger plays. Promote the partnership of fun and learning by laughing and smiling while singing silly counting songs and rhymes such as "Five Little Monkeys," "One Potato, Two Potato" and "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe."

Cognitive Development: Children are naturally curious about the world around them. Ask open-ended questions to promote logical thinking and problem solving. Encourage

children to share their knowledge and thoughts about mathematical concepts that they encounter while playing.

BOOKLIST

Reading to children is the most important activity adults can do with them to support early learning and literacy skills. Select any of these books, or a book of your choosing, to read and further explore this month's **MATH** theme.

Three Friends: A Counting Book/Tres amigos: Un cuento para contar (2–5)

by Christina Maria Brusca and Tona Wilson

This counting adventure, set in the Southwest, follows *un caballo* (one horse) and *dos vaqueros* (two cowboys) as they try to round up some cattle.

The Doorbell Rang (3–5)

by Pat Hutchins

Each time the doorbell rings, there are more people who have come to share Ma's wonderful cookies

One Hundred Hungry Ants (3–5)

by Eleanor Pinczes One hundred hungry ants head toward a picnic to get yummys for their tummies, but making stops to change their line formation--thereby showing different divisions of 100--causes them to lose both time and food in the end.

Only One (4–6)

by Marc Harshman

At a county fair, there are 1 million stars in one sky, 500 seeds in one pumpkin, 10 cents in one dime, eight horses on one merry-go-round, four wheels on one wagon, and so on.

LuLu's Lemonade (4–6)

by Barbara deRubertis

On a hot summer day, three children squabble over which ingredients and what quantities should go into their extra special lemonade.

How Many Stars in the Sky (5–8)

by Lenny Hort

One night when Mama is away, neither Daddy nor child can sleep. Together, they seek a good place to count the stars in the night sky.

Grandfather Counts (5–8)

by Andrea Cheng

The numbers one through eight are naturally incorporated into this moving story of a bicultural, biracial family, in which a young girl and her grandfather, recently emigrated from China, get acquainted.

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