



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime



Easy as 1, 2, 3:

Building Your Child's Early Math Skills

Math doesn't start when children enter school. Even babies and toddlers are learning math from the world around them! And you can help. No special skills, lessons, or tools required.

First, use simple math language in your everyday life. The more that young children hear and use math language with their parents, the better their math skills are later on. Here are some ideas!

Help your child learn about counting:

- ◆ You can count anything and everything. Your child's toes. The steps up to the front door and down again. Ask your child if they want two apple slices or three. Count them together.

Help your child learn about adding and subtracting:

- ◆ Make groups of things and compare them. Make two lines of dry cereal or crackers on the table. Which line has *more*? Which has *less*? Can you add or take away to make the lines the *same*, or *equal*?
- ◆ Notice how the number of things you have changes: *You ate 2 crackers. Now you have 1 left.* Or, *Kate gave you 1 train. Now you have: 1, 2, 3 trains.*



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Help your child learn words that describe shapes and where things are:

- ◆ Name the shapes that children see each day: *Look, our bathroom tiles are squares. Squares have 1, 2, 3, 4 sides and 1, 2, 3, 4 corners.*
- ◆ Use words that describe where something is: *On top of, next to, behind, in front, next to, above, below, under, and more.*

Help your child learn about patterns:

- ◆ Talk about what comes next: *First, we changed your diaper. Now we are getting your bottle. Then it will be naptime.*
- ◆ Play games with patterns: *Let's do a dance! Clap, stomp, clap, stomp, clap, stomp. Can you try it too?*
- ◆ Notice patterns in the world: *Your shirt has red, blue, red, blue stripes.*

Help your child learn about measurement:

- ◆ Describe and compare sizes: *Look how **big** that dog is. And the other dog is so **small**!* You can talk about long/short, close/far, hot/cold, and other simple measurement terms.

Using math language helps your child build their early number skills. These early experiences give them a strong math foundation for kindergarten and beyond!

Have more questions? Talk to your child's healthcare provider or one of the professionals supporting your family.

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