

Working with your Child to Develop Stronger Math Skills

Math skills develop from every day life experiences long before they are formalized in the classroom. From writing the numerals correctly to grasping basic math facts, you can help your child develop math skills according to their natural ability and learning style.

Children develop math skills at different rates and in different ways. A common problem is that a child has trouble remembering math problems no matter how many times they review them. It's important to stimulate a child's mind in various ways to reach them as an individual and build a connection between their mind and the material they need to master in school. Here are some ways to approach the teaching of math and things to watch for that take into account the varied rates of development in different children.

Forming Numerals

Be sure your young learner has a mastery of creating the numerals in writing. It's a separate skill. Some children can count and even add large numbers in their head, or with props, from a very young age, but have difficulty when it comes to working it out on paper.

Number Games

Games are a great way to build understanding. In school math can be just another subject. Building a recognizable link between school work and daily life is crucial to education. You can get board games, computer games, online games, or you can just make adding or sequence games up as you ride along in your car. Find math in the kitchen, in the garden, in the play room. Number games make counting and working with numbers, a fun part of life instead of a daunting required subject.

Working With Space

Understanding spatial relationships is an often underestimated but fundamental skill. Just making a letter fit on the line involves the ability to estimate and work with space. Measuring furniture, floor space, the distance from the bedroom to the bathroom are all great exercises. You can work with inches and feet, and convert from one to the other. In time you'll be able to explore the metric system and begin measuring volume. This will help give your child a sense of how things fit together and how to work with the numbers that describe those relationships.

The math children use in school is just a formal application of all kinds of daily experiences. When a child makes that realization, a light will go on and they'll become curious. When curiosity sets in, learning becomes fun. When learning becomes fun there's no stopping it! A child who struggles with math at school doesn't need constant drilling of specific problems. They need varied experiences that allow them to work with numbers in a "hands on" way. When they have the concepts woven into their perspective, they'll be better equipped to handle the formal arithmetic they encounter in the classroom.