

Language & Math Development

Promoting Language Development and Math Skills in Everyday Activities

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To many school-age children, language and math are subjects learned in the classroom; the integral role of these skills in everyday life is sometimes overlooked. In actuality, the thought processes required for language and math are the building blocks for nearly all other skills. Therefore, the earlier a child begins to master these skills, the more adept he or she will be at future learning.

Language Development

Language development involves both expression and comprehension. Language expression is the ability to produce sounds that are used to express a child's needs and thoughts, while language comprehension is the ability to understand others. Activities such as listening, singing, repeating, reading, and speaking all promote language development. A child's language develops rapidly when they are surrounded with both the spoken and written word.

Here are some things you can do to promote the development of language skills:

Infants

- Talk and sing to them as you work around the house
- Talk to them in complete sentences
- Read stories to them so they can see, hear, and recognize new words

Toddlers

- Talk to them before they go to bed. Discuss what happened during the day, and talk about the plans for tomorrow
- Encourage your child to recognize symbols and attach them to words by asking them to look for certain items when you go shopping
- Respond to their language, even when it doesn't make sense.

Preschooler

- Label items in their rooms so they associate the written word with the object
- When riding in a car, start making up a story. Every time the car stops, the next person adds to the story.
- Give your child the daily newspaper and a pencil. Have them circle any words they can identify.

Early Childhood

- When traveling to new places, designate your child to be the navigator, keeping an eye out for street names, store signs, restaurants, etc.
- Write down several items on your grocery list for your child to find when you go to the store.
- Have your child write down topics they would like to discuss and put them in the glove compartment of the car. When the ride gets boring or stressful, pull out a topic and have a one-on-one conversation with your child.

Math Skills

Math skills are developed as children interact with objects. Concepts such as size, shape, form, numbers, sequencing, and grouping are all included in this category.

Infants

- Allow them to build towers with blocks
- Play hide-and-peek games
- Give them toys with bright colors and a variety of shapes

Toddler

- Instead of handing them objects such as toys, cookies, tools, etc., count them as you give it to them
- Allow your toddler to sort the laundry by color (you might want to inspect this activity before turning on the washer)
- Recite fingerplays and songs that involve numbers

Preschooler

- Allow them to measure ingredients as they help you cook
- Make a chart for daily activities, then have your child keep record of occurrences. You can chart sunny days, phone calls, etc.
- Send your child on a scavenger hunt in his room, back yard, or at the park. Have him collect the items he finds in a bag, then have him identify the biggest/smallest, lightest/darkest, tallest/shortest, etc.

Early Childhood

- Designate your child as the official score keeper when playing games. This promotes fairness as well as math skills
- Give your child a weekly allowance. Identify guidelines for how the money can be used, and then allow the child to make spending and saving choices within those guidelines.
- Watch for numbers on license plates and have your child add them together.

Continue to look for ways to turn everyday activities into learning opportunities for your children. Allow them time and freedom to explore the world around them, and most importantly, show them learning can be fun.