

Math+Science Connection

Beginning Edition

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

March 2015

TOOLS & TIDBITS

Bowling for numbers

Using masking tape and a marker, help your child number 10 empty water bottles, 1–10. He can arrange them in a triangle shape (like bowling pins). To play, take turns rolling a ball toward the pins, trying to knock down as many as possible. Add the numbers on the pins knocked down—that's your score.



Oil and water

Let your youngster add blue food coloring to a cup of water. Then, she could measure 4 tbsp. of the blue water and 4 tbsp. of vegetable oil into a clear jar, screw on the lid, and shake. When she sets the bottle down, she'll see that the oil floats on top of the blue water—because oil and water won't mix!

Book picks

Read *Two of Everything* (Lily Toy Hong), and your child will double over with laughter as a magic pot multiplies everything by 2.

Mad Margaret Experiments with the Scientific Method (Eric Braun) is an amusing introduction to the way scientists conduct experiments.

Just for fun

Q: How many apples grow on a tree?

A: All of them!



Algebra for beginners

At school, your youngster is learning early algebra skills. With these ideas, she'll enjoy playing with algebra after school, too.

Patterns

Working with patterns of objects will help your child see patterns in numbers—a basic principle of algebra:

- Challenge her to line family members up in a pattern. For instance, she might arrange you by gender (boy, girl, boy, girl) or hair color (brown, brown, blond, brown, brown, blond). Have her tell you what would come next (brown hair).
- Together, make a growing pattern. For example, draw $\odot \heartsuit \heartsuit \heartsuit \heartsuit \heartsuit \heartsuit \heartsuit$ on a sheet of paper. Ask your youngster which part of the pattern is changing (the hearts) and how (they are growing by one more each time). Then, have her extend the pattern ($\odot \heartsuit \heartsuit \heartsuit$).

Parts of a whole

These part-part-whole relationship games will help your child see that numbers are made up of two or more parts:



- Make “bunny ears” for each other by placing your hands on top of your heads. Hold up any number of fingers, and the other person has to say the number needed to make 10. *Example:* Raise 3 fingers, and your youngster says, “7.” That's like doing the algebra equation $3 + x = 10$.
- Show your youngster a group of pebbles (say, 8), and have her close her eyes. Drop a few, one at a time, into a pie pan. She should count the number she hears drop into the pan (6) and tell you how many pebbles are left in your hand (2). What number sentences could she make? ($6 + 2 = 8$ and $8 - 6 = 2$).

Flying saucer

Amaze your child with this demonstration of static electricity.

Cut a circular strip from a plastic produce or newspaper bag to create a “flying saucer” (a round band). Then, blow up a balloon, and knot the end. Let your youngster rub a cotton T-shirt on the balloon for about 45 seconds. Immediately, hold the flying saucer about a foot above the balloon, and let go. It will fly!

How did that happen? When your child rubbed the balloon, it created a negative charge. The plastic band also has a negative charge—so the two like charges repel (push away from) each other.



Sort your toys

When is clean-up time a math and science lesson? When your child sorts his toys by different *attributes*. Try these strategies, and he'll learn about classification as well as responsibility.

What goes where?

Say he has been playing with his blocks. Now it's time to put them away. What would be a good way to sort the pieces into different bins? He might organize them by type, color, shape, or size.



What doesn't belong?

Help your youngster see why something doesn't fit into a category. If he's sorting his toy vehicles by where they are used, you could pick up a toy airplane and ask if it goes in the pile with boats. When he giggles and says, "No!" ask him to explain why not.

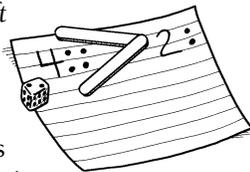
What's my rule?

Play "What's my rule?" He can decide how to sort books and get started. As he moves them onto shelves, you guess what attribute he is sorting by (perhaps by whether they're hardback or paperback). Then, swap roles, and let him figure out how you decided to sort another toy (say, puzzles, by number of pieces).

MATH CORNER Number muncher

Making a "number muncher" is a clever way for your youngster to compare numbers.

Materials: 2 craft sticks, glue, paper, dice, pencil



1. Help your child glue two craft sticks into a V-shape. Turn it sideways, and it becomes a "muncher," or a tool for showing $>$ (greater than) or $<$ (less than). Explain that the open part faces the higher number—like it's a mouth about to "munch" it!

2. Have your youngster roll a die, write that number (4) on the left side of a sheet of paper, and draw dots to match (4 dots). Then, she should roll the die again and put that number (2) and 2 dots on the right side. She can use her "muncher" to decide which number is bigger. Ask her to say the number sentence: "4 is greater than 2." *Note:* If the numbers are the same, they are equal.

3. Once she's comfortable with single digits, move on to double-digit numbers. This time, she'll roll two dice and use them to create a number (roll a 4 and a 5, and she can make 45 or 54).

SCIENCE LAB

Leaky cup?

This simple water pressure experiment will surprise—and delight—your child.

You'll need: empty plastic food container with a lid, pushpin, bowl, water

Here's how: Have your youngster turn the container upside down and use the pushpin to poke a few holes in the bottom. Let her fill a bowl with water, and completely immerse the container (right side up) in the water so it fills with water and snap on the lid. Then, she should lift the closed container completely out of the water.

What happens? Water does *not* leak out of the holes! Now, have her poke a hole in the top of the lid—water will begin dripping out of the bottom holes.

Why? The first time, air could not get into the container to push the water out. But once a hole is poked in the top, the air pushes on the water and forces it out the bottom holes.



PARENT TO PARENT

Race to a dollar

My son, Andy, seemed confused by how much coins were worth. I asked his teacher about this, and she suggested games to play at home.

So far our favorite is Trading Up. First, we get out a handful of change, making sure we have plenty of pennies and also some nickels, dimes, and quarters. We need a few dollar bills, too.

Then, we take turns rolling a die and taking that many pennies. If

Andy rolls a 4, he gets 4 pennies. Once he has enough to trade for a bigger coin, he does—for instance, he'd trade 5 pennies for a nickel. When he has a nickel and 5 more pennies, he trades for a dime.

The first one to be able to swap coins for a dollar bill wins! Andy loves the game, and I can see that it's really helping him to learn what each coin is worth.



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children's math and science skills.

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
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