

Helping Your Child Be Ready to Learn Math

Most children learn to write numerals and do arithmetic problems in kindergarten, first and second grade. For younger children, there are many things that parents and adults can do to help them develop the foundational skills that will build their success for the elementary math program.

The New Mexico Early Learning Outcomes include several school-success building skills related to math. Our goal for each child is that he or she:

- Is learning to count
- Is learning about shapes
- Is learning that things can be measured
- Separates objects by similarities and differences

The following activities can help support your child's development of the skills that will help your child learn to understand math concepts and be ready to use that understanding in kindergarten, first and second grade:

How Tall? How Long?

Measuring things and figuring out which is longer, shorter, wider, or heavier is another important experience that helps children be prepared for more formal measurement activities in later grades. Again, you can compare the sizes of things every day in your home life. Whose shoes are the longest? The shortest? Who's taller? Mom or Dad? Brother or sister? Which ball is the heaviest? Which is the lightest? Is a feather lighter than a basketball? Can you feel the difference?

It's not important for preschoolers to use rulers and tape measures perfectly. But they do love to play with the tools that grown-ups use to measure. You may encourage them to go around the house and find things that are just as long as your ruler or tape measure. These kinds of comparisons will help them think more about the lengths, heights and weights of objects.

Measuring your child's height and keeping a record on a long piece of paper hanging somewhere in your house is a wonderful way to use measurement in a way that will fascinate your young child. The, you can keep track and see how much he or she is growing over time!

