

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:

Count, Count, Count!

Counting objects, fingers, toes, chairs, spoons, socks, shoes, is the way that mathematical understanding develops. You can make a game of counting items in your everyday interactions with your child.

As you count together, touch or point to the item being counted and encourage your child to do the same. If they get mixed up, or count incorrectly, say, "Let's do it together!" and take their finger or hand in yours to do the counting again.

For younger toddlers, keep the number of items to just a few. Then, as your child becomes more secure in understanding the sequence (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.), you can add more items. Most five-year-olds understand and can count up to quantities of 20.

