

## WHY ARE MATH SKILLS IMPORTANT?

Whether measuring ingredients for a recipe, or finding the right amount of change – **math is everywhere!** During kindergarten, children are beginning to develop the math skills needed for understanding and working with numbers, adding and subtracting, creating patterns, and recognizing shapes. These skills are key to later learning and school success.

## WHAT IS MY CHILD LEARNING?

In kindergarten, children are working on...

- Count verbally up to 100 and “skip count” by 10s
- Counting and comparing quantities of two groups of objects using words like “more and “fewer”
- Solve word problems with sums to 10 and difference within 10, using concrete objects
- Recognizing common shapes and identifying their attributes (e.g., squares have 4 sides and 4 angles)
- Describing the location of one object relative to another (e.g., above, below, next to)
- Identifying, creating, and extending patterns

### How can I promote development of math skills?

You can help your child learn these math skills by providing opportunities to apply them in “real life” situations. Below are just a few fun ways that you can do this!

**Count and Compare Household Objects:** Count groups of objects around the house (e.g., toy cars, piles of shoes, crayons) or food items at meal times (e.g., grapes, crackers). Talk about which group has more and which has fewer. *“How many grapes do you have? How many do I have? Who has more?”*

**Play “Can You Guess My Number”:** Hide your hands behind your back. Give your child clues to guess how many fingers you are holding up. Possible clues: *You can make this number with 3 and 1, or 2 and 2; It comes after 6 and before 8; It comes after 3 if you are counting backwards; I have to use all of my fingers to make this number.*

**Go on a Shape Scavenger Hunt:** Ask your child to look for different shapes around the house (e.g., circles, triangles, squares). Have them count the number of each shape that they find.

**Make Patterns:** Ask your child to make a pattern with household items (e.g., Legos, coins, snacks) and tell you what repeats (e.g., red, red, blue Lego). Make patterns with different movements while walking to the bus stop (e.g., step, jump, clap, clap, step, jump, clap, clap).

**Play “I Spy” Using Spatial Words:** For example, *I spy an object that is **under** the couch; I spy an object that is to the **left** of the washing machine.*

## WHY ARE SELF-REGULATION SKILLS IMPORTANT?

**SELF-REGULATION** is the skill to control one's own attention, emotions, and behaviors when faced with a challenge. This includes following directions, waiting patiently, being in control of one's own body, remembering rules, persisting on tasks, and managing emotions. These skills set the foundation for learning because they are the tools that your child needs to cope with the demands that come up at school and home.

## WHAT IS MY CHILD LEARNING?

In kindergarten, children are developing and learning how to...

- Attend to the teacher during group instruction time
- Follow 2 or 3 step directions
- Wait patiently
- Keep working on a task or activity even when it becomes harder
- Complete an activity or task independently
- Remember classroom rules in the moment
- Transition smoothly from one activity to the next

## How can I promote development of self-regulation skills?

You can help your child build their self-regulation skills by using strategies like those listed below. You can also talk to your child's teacher about how your child is doing at school and how this compares with their behavior at home. If you and your child's teacher use some of the same strategies, it will give your child an extra boost in developing their self-regulation skills.

**Appreciate Your Child's Efforts:** When your child is working hard or doing something that makes you proud, let them know! You can do this by smiling, giving them a high five, or saying out loud what they are doing. Here are 2 tips to make the most of this strategy:

- **Be specific**—Describe in detail what you appreciate. For example, it's better to say *"Great job - you worked hard picking up the toys!"* than saying *"Great job!"*
- **Focus on effort and persistence**—To increase your child's motivation and persistence, pay attention to *effort* and *improvement*. For example, it's better to say *"I like how hard you worked on putting that puzzle together"* than saying *"You did that puzzle perfectly!"* or *"You finished that puzzle easily!"*

**Offer Choice & Effective Commands:**

- Give your child **lots of choices** throughout the day so that they will be more likely to follow your commands when choice is not an option. For example, *"It's time to get dressed! What shirt do you want to wear today?"* or *"It's time for bed! Which book should we read tonight?"*
- When you need to give a **command**, make sure it's **clear, simple, and specific**. Your command should be a statement (*"Pick up your blocks."*) and not a question (*"Don't you think it's time to pick-up your blocks?"*).

**Play Games:** Play games that help your kindergartner practice controlling their own behavior (e.g., Red Light-Green Light, Mother May I, Simon-Says, & Freeze tag). For example, they can only run when it's "green light" and have to stop running when it's "red light."

### WHY ARE SOCIAL SKILLS IMPORTANT?

**SOCIAL SKILLS** refer to your child's developing capacity to work together with other children and adults and form positive relationships. These skills include making and keeping friends, as well as working through conflicts. Children use their social skills at home with their family, at the park with people they meet, and at school with their teachers and classmates.

### WHAT IS MY CHILD LEARNING?

In kindergarten, children are developing and learning how to...

- Tell others about their needs and feelings verbally
- Recognize how others are feeling
- Take turns
- Share materials and toys
- Understand what is the same and different about people
- Work to solve disagreements with other children and adults
- Manage emotions during disagreements

### How can I promote development of social skills?

You can help your child build their social skills by talking about feelings and friendships and by helping them figure out what to do when things don't go their way. Talk with your child's teacher to better understand how their social skills are developing and what you and your child's teacher can do together to help support your child in this area.

**Talk about Emotions:** When you notice your child starting to feel a certain way (happy, sad, angry, excited, nervous, frustrated), ask how they are feeling. It's important to talk about both positive and negative emotions with children. Talking openly about emotions helps children learn to manage them over time.

- *"You just threw that puzzle piece down really hard. I think you are frustrated because you and your sister both wanted the same piece. Tell me about what is happening."*

**Help Your Child Manage Emotions:** When your child is displaying a strong emotion (crying, yelling), first show your understanding by identifying the emotion, and then help them use a calm-down technique.


- *"You are feeling very overwhelmed...let's take three deeeep breaths together. In-and-out, in-and-out, in-and-out. How are you feeling now? OK, now that you are calmer let's think about what to do about this."*

**Help Your Child Problem-Solve:** Whenever problems or disagreements come up, encourage your child to identify the problem and brainstorm solutions. It can be tempting to solve problems for children, but it's important that we don't take over the problem-solving process. Four key steps to problems solving are to 1) figure out the problem, 2) come up with lots of solutions, 3) decide on the best one, and 4) give one a try.

- *"Okay, let's think about what the problem is with you and your sister playing this puzzle? What do you think is going on? Hmm, what could we do to make this better? OK, let's give that a try."*

**Encourage Friendship Skills:** When you see your child displaying good social skills, be sure to let them know that they are doing a good job!

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 Information regarding PALS literacy assessments and activities to support literacy development are on the “FOR PARENTS” tab of the PALS website (<http://pals.virginia.edu/>).