

# 10 Tips to help your child with math

## Tips for Kindergarten to Grade 3

1. **Counting can be fun and entertaining.** Sing counting songs such as "One, Two Buckle My Shoe". Your local librarian can recommend fun counting books. Play Hopscotch – it's a counting game! There are lots of games where you count, such as *Snakes and Ladders*, *Dominoes*, *Crazy Eights* and *Candyland*®.
2. **Computers + math = fun.** There are great computer games available for math – ask your librarian or check out your local computer store. Make sure they are "parent approved". There are also super websites that have fun math games, such as [TVOKids](#), or do an Internet search for other sites.
3. **Start Easy and Work Up!** Once they have got the hang of counting by 1s, introduce skip counting, such as counting by 2s and 5s.
4. **Use household items for counting practice.** Practise adding and subtracting with objects found around your house like spoons or pots and pans. When they've become good at these skills, move on to simple multiplication.
5. **Tap into your child's curiosity.** Go on a number hunt together and discover places where numbers are used such as a clock, TV, computer keyboard, calendar, telephones and licence plates.
6. **Use everyday activities.** Your child's world is filled with everyday math problems that can be solved. For example, "There are four people in our family and we each need a knife and a fork to eat dinner. How many knives and forks do we need to set the table?"
7. **Kitchens can be math zones.** Bake some muffins or cookies and ask your child to help you measure out the ingredients. It may be a bit messy but it's fun family time and there's nothing like a fresh cookie as a reward. Have math fridge magnets available so children can start making number patterns and doing simple math problems.
8. **Predict and compare.** Start to measure and estimate things like how far it is from the driveway to the house or how long a trip will take and then measure and compare the actual time it takes.
9. **Talk about time.** The concept of time can be hard to grasp. Talk to your kids about minutes and hours. Then get them to try counting days and weeks – for example how many "sleeps" until the weekend or a visit to a friend or relative.
10. **Identify geometric shapes and sizes.** Play "I Spy". Instead of looking for words beginning with a letter, look for different colours or shapes and count the number you find in the room.

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## Tips for Grades 4 to 6

1. **Connect math to daily life.** Let your kids know the importance of math in day-to-day living. Talk about the ways you use math in your job and around the house. Show them a tax form or how you pay the bills. Ask them how they used math during the day.
2. **Practise mental math using coins.** For example, show that a certain item costs a certain amount and ask what coins are needed to pay for it.
3. **Play games together.** Show them math can be fun and exciting. Play family games to add excitement to math activities, like chess or checkers or games in the car such as math bingo or adding licence plate numbers. Lots of board games need math such as *Junior Monopoly*® or play card games such as *Uno*®.
4. **Cooking can be counting fun!** Get older children involved in helping out at dinner time and let them help measure ingredients for dishes or estimate the number of potatoes that are needed to feed everyone.
5. **Play the estimating game.** Ask your kids to estimate measurements, distances, time and grocery bills. Be sure to compare the estimate with actual. Or get them to guess how much the apples you are going to buy will weigh and then take them to the scale in the grocery store and find out.
6. **Perform time calculations.** For example, make up a sentence and ask your child to recite it as many times as possible in 15 seconds. Then ask how many times it could be repeated in 1 minute, 5 minutes, 10 minutes, etc.
7. **Use common toys to understand math concepts.** Build a tower from blocks. Count the blocks. Then talk about the need for a base of the right size and the stability it creates.
8. **Sports and math.** There is a lot of math used in sports: batting averages, points per game, save percentages – these are math terms that a sports enthusiast will love. If you watch a game with your child, read the newspaper report together sometime the next day and talk about the math concepts.
9. **Computers + math = fun.** There are great computer games available for math—ask your librarian or check out your local computer store. Make sure they are "parent approved". There are also super websites that have fun math games, so do an Internet search for sites and bookmark them for future use.
10. **Measuring made easy.** Estimate and measure the area of different shapes. For example, use small square objects (plastic tiles, dice, etc.) to estimate then measure how many are needed to fill the area of various flat surfaces such as a magazine cover.