

Fun with Math: Operations

Math is all around us and your toddler has been developing math ideas and skills from birth.

We use math language every day, often without noticing. Research has shown that this matters. Laying a strong foundation with **early math talk** makes it easier for your child to grasp more difficult concepts later.



Math Talk

Math talk grows with your child. It is *simply talking to your child about the math that they experience* (naeyc.org). For example, when you take a walk and count the trees on your block ("Let's count the trees! I see one, oh, here is another, that's two, and another one, that's three"), or when you sort clothes ("This t-shirt is little, that's yours, this one is bigger, it's mine"), you are using math language.

We know children learn best through joyful, playful activities in the context of a loving relationship.

Let's Explore Operations

This might sound really complicated, but we can think of every number operation as a simple story asking questions such as: *How many more?* or *Is it fair?*

There are many opportunities to compare numbers every day, and *number operations are the tools we use to find the answers* (Early Math Collaborative) to questions like the ones above.

Even two-year olds or 3-year olds notice when they get fewer cookies than someone else. We can help them deepen their mathematical understanding of this concept with math language and fun activities,



Activities

Find some play dough.

Manipulating play dough is a fun fine motor activity that strengthens the fine muscles in your child's hand at the same time.

Roll the play dough into an even number of little balls about the same size and punch them down so they look like cookies. Point and count together. How many cookies?

Now share the cookies fairly between two people. How many did each of you get?

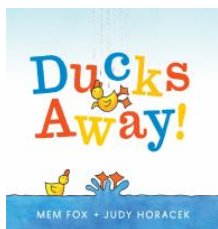
Next gather your cookies again and divide them unfairly.

Discuss what you could do so that both of you have the same number of cookies. Talk about how you took cookies away from one pile and added them to the other to make it fair.

Math Language

Here are some math words to get you started: more, less, equal, fair, take away, add, divide

Let's Read



Ducks Away! by Mem Fox

One by one five little ducklings tumble off the bridge into the river below--and mother duck follows them.