

Math Counts! Fun & Creative Ways to Present Math Concepts to Young Children

Though preschoolers generally don't recognize it, math is another way to understand and make sense of the world, much like language. What exactly is math? Math is the observation, identification, description and explanation of numbers, space, relation, and order. Counting, measuring, problem solving, reasoning, and identifying shapes and patterns are the activities of math.

How Children Learn Math

Preschool children learn best when they are:

- Allowed to go at their own pace.
- Not forced.
- Encouraged to explore, think, and solve problems for themselves.
- Actively engaged in something that has meaning to them.
- Having fun

The best way to teach preschool children is in a purposeful manner—in a context that has a purpose to the child. Teaching moments can be created by playing a game that involves mathematics (e.g. recognizing the number of dots on a die or a domino).

Having Fun with Numbers and Math Concepts

Math Beat. Gather a drum, rhythm sticks, bells, or anything that you can use to create a beat. As you bang the instrument, count out each beat and ask the children to join you. Then, ask the children to count the beats silently. Bang the instrument two or three times to start and then ask the children how many beats they counted. Let children take turns beating the drum. For added difficulty, beat and count different sounds. For example, one bang of the drum, one ring of the bell, and one clap of the rhythm sticks create three beats.

Shapes and Patterns

Snack Shapes. For snack time, occasionally offer a variety of foods in different shapes, such as round and square snack crackers, round oranges or apples, bananas cut into round slices, and sandwiches cut in triangles. Ask the kids which shapes taste best. You could have a "Round Snack Day" one day, a "Square Snack Day" on another, and a "Snack Shapes Day" on yet another.

Sorting and Measuring

Money Sort. Gather pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters. Start by mixing pennies and quarters in a pile, and asking children to sort them into two piles. Then, mix in a third type of coin, and ask the children to sort again. For those ready for more difficult sorting, mix four coins and allow children to sort. Ask questions such as, "How are these coins different? When might you use a penny when shopping? What can you buy with a quarter? Are the coins the same size? Which is larger and which is smaller?" Ask children to guess how many coins are in the pile and then count them together.

Measuring Crayons. Following coloring time, give each child two crayons of differing lengths and ask, "Which is longer? Which is shorter?" Give crayons of three different lengths to children who need more of a challenge and urge them to put the crayons in order from shortest to longest. Ask more questions to encourage thinking like, "Does a shorter crayon work better than a longer crayon? Why or why not?" To demonstrate how we describe length in numbers as well as words, give each child a ruler and show how to measure crayons.

For the complete article visit:

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By Shelley Butler

http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=596



Recipe Corner

Easy Pizza Pinwheels



Ingredients

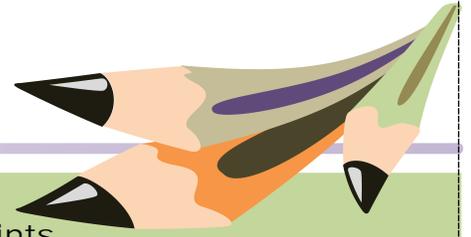
- 1 can Refrigerated Crescents (or Pizza Dough)
- ¼ cup pizza sauce or marinara
- ¾ cup shredded Mozzarella Cheese
- Pizza toppings of your choice

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cover a cookie sheet with foil and spray lightly with cooking spray. Lightly flour a large wooden cutting board. Roll out dough onto the floured surface, pressing seams together as you go. Spread pizza sauce evenly over the dough, to the edges. Top with shredded Mozzarella and your choice of pizza toppings. Roll pizza width-wise (the longest side) and seal and slice into 1 inch pieces. Place pinwheels on the prepared cookie sheet, about 2 inches apart. Bake at 350 degrees for about 9-11 minutes, or until the tops are golden brown. Allow to cool for a couple of minutes then serve with marinara or ranch for dipping.



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Fall Leaf Prints



1. Gather up some leaves.
2. Paint the leaves (water color worked best but the markers also worked, especially if sprayed with a little water). Experiment...try painting the leaf the colors that it is in nature. Try painting it all one color. Try non-realistic colors. And so on.
3. Press the leaves paint-side down. Roll with a rolling pin. You can also just press down.

Additional Information

National Association for the Education of Young Children

<http://www.naeyc.org/>

Caring for Our Children

National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs

<http://cfoc.nrckids.org/>



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