# Simple ways to build math skills at home

<https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/simple-ways-to-build-math-skills-at-home/>

## Problem solving with real-world math

Math has evolved from the computation we most likely experienced in math class to an emphasis on problem solving. Computation is still important, but it is used to solve real- life problems. The emphasis is generally on math processes that enable your child to learn multiple strategies to become a proficient problem solver. Model the importance of math in the real world and encourage your child to help when you:

* Balance your checkbook
* Pay bills
* Estimate the cost of the groceries in your cart
* Determine how much food to buy or make for a party
* Double a recipe or cut a recipe in half
* Figure the cost of lunch at a restaurant
* Calculate the cost of school lunch for the week or month
* Determine how long your child will need to save his allowance in order to buy a particular item
* Determine the number of miles driven in X hours
* Determine how long it will take to drive home going X mph
* Figure the cost of X number of minutes of cell phone use if you pay X cents/minutes
* Determine how many gallons of gas you can buy with X dollars
* Determine how many chocolate chips are needed if X number of cookies each has 3 chocolate chips

## Games that build number sense

Play games with your child to reinforce number sense. Try Racko by Hasbro. This game involves putting numbered cards in order from greatest to least. Yahtzee is perfect for working on multiplication facts and reinforcing addition skills. There are many fun card and dice games that utilize math skills.

## Practice multiplication facts

Your child is expected to know multiplication facts. Have your child bounce a basketball as he says the multiples of different numbers. For example, he can practice the multiples of 9 for each bounce 9, 18, 27, 36. Then he can say them backward: 81, 72, 63, 54. Research shows that kinesthetic movement helps the brain learn facts.

The following ideas are from:

<https://www.scribd.com/document/57759461/Activities-Kids-Can-Do-at-Home-to-Develop-Number-Sense-Handout2>

**Estimate, Then Count**

Estimation skills develop over time. Engage your child in a variety of estimating challenges. Keep the focus on “close enough,” rather than “exact.”

Keep the number of objects within a range of numbers your child is familiar with. (For many new first graders, within the range of 10-30 is appropriate). For larger amounts, you might have your child count a small sampling (5or 10) of the collection, then try to imagine groups of 5s or 10s to estimate. Estimating challenges might include:

* How many M&Ms in a bag?
* How many Cheerios are left in the box?
* How many steps to the car?
* How many cherries are in the bag?
* How many cups of water to fill the bowl?
* How many days until \_\_\_\_\_\_\_?
* How many people in the store? How many cookies will fit in the container? How many cars are in the parking lot? How many seconds will it take to run around the house?

**Bake Together**

Involve your child in making cookies, having him/her measure the ingredients. Imagine together how many cookies you might make from the cookie dough, and then see how close you were to your estimates! (Check in on your estimates from time to time as you are making them: “Hmmmm! I guess we could make 20 cookies but we’ve already make 18 and we have lots left! I’m thinking now that maybe we can make 30 cookies!”)

**Build Together**

Whole numbers and fractions show up everywhere when building things. Involve your child in a simple building project (wood, material, paper, etc.). Remember to estimate, first! You might even throw in an estimate of time: “I wonder how long it will take us to make this bird house? 5 minutes? 5 hours? 5 days?”

**Subtract from 100 (or 1000!)**

To play this game, you need one die, paper and pencil for each player. Write 100 at the top of your paper. Throw the die and subtract the amount from 100. In turn, throw the die and continue subtracting. The first person to get to zero wins the game. For addition practice, reverse the process. The first person to reach 100 wins the game.

\*Ideas compiled by Suzanne Yakes SPS Math Coach