

MATH Around the Room

Children's Math Development

Here's a look at how children develop math skills, age by age—and how you can help them along the path to math.

A child may

0
to
2



- * use all her senses to identify familiar objects and people around her.
- * begin to predict and anticipate sequences of events.
- * notice cause-and-effect relationships.
- * begin to classify objects in a simple but thoughtful manner—for example, toys that roll, toys that don't.
- * use language to classify objects according to basic characteristics, such as type (toy animals, blocks).
- * begin to use relationship words and comparative language, such as bigger and under.

2
to
3



- * begin to understand the concept and use of numbers—she realizes, for example, that when she counts her crackers, each is given one number.
- * count three or four objects, but then count the same object twice or skip objects.
- * understand many directional and relational words, such as straight and behind.
- * be able to fit large puzzle pieces into place, demonstrating an understanding of the relationships between geometric shapes.
- * notice patterns in the things he sees and hears.
- * be able to make cause-and-effect predictions.

3
to
4



- * recognize and look for geometric shapes in the environment.
- * enjoy sorting and classifying objects, usually by only one characteristic at a time—color, shape, size.
- * begin to classify things by their uses.
- * notice and compare similarities and differences.

4
to
5



- * enjoy playing games involving numbers.
- * struggle with classifications that aren't obvious.
- * count objects or people up to 10 or 20 with less skip-counting or double counting.
- * understand that symbols represent complex patterns.
- * solve multiple-piece puzzles by recognizing and matching geometric shapes.
- * use concepts such as height, size, and length to compare objects.

5
to
6



- * begin to be able to add small numbers in his head but still be most comfortable adding real objects he can actually touch and move.
- * classify objects according to more than one characteristic—sorting the round and blue blocks and the red square ones.
- * have a long attention span for activities that interest him.
- * use positional words to explain spatial relationships.