

## **Math for Infants and Toddlers**

**by Angel Avery-Wright**

Mathematical concepts include counting/comparing quantities, shapes, and measurement/comparing sizes. The learning of mathematical concepts begins very early in life. Math for infants and toddlers can be introduced informally and naturally as opportunities come up. There are many toys for young children that relate to math.

Math is learned in meaningful context when teachers count with children during daily routines, such as diapering or mealtimes.

Math is already part of the daily routine. One just must acknowledge it and use it. When parents arrive in the morning and share information with you about how their child ate or slept, take that information and use it with the infants and toddlers. “You ate eight ounces of formula for breakfast! That was a big breakfast.” “You ate four ounces two hours ago. You will be hungry again soon.” “You slept six hours last night. I think that was a little.” Whenever possible, include math in the daily routines. Tell the infants that you are mixing eight ounces of water and two tablespoons of formula to make a bottle. Discuss shapes during meals and snacks. Mention that slices of tomatoes or cucumbers are circles, that crackers come in circles and squares, and that sandwiches often have round cheeses and square lunch meat.

Do you include math in your display? Are there photos of shapes and numbers and what those numbers mean in terms of how many is that? When talking to children about the display, include math concepts in the discussion. “This shows five little monkeys. Let’s count them.”

Music is a great way to include math and singing songs and chanting rhymes is a way to help children learn to count. Songs that include numbers such as “Five Little Monkeys” and “One, Two, Buckle My Shoe” are great examples of math songs and finger plays. These can be used during transitions and mealtimes, or as a free play activity. Include simple math activities in daily play activities. For toddlers, have materials such as puzzles, cash registers, phones, shape sorters, blocks of various shapes, etc. and make sure math talk with the children provides an understanding of the meaning of numbers, numerals and shapes.

Picture books that count or show shapes or size comparisons can be read to the children regularly.

Math can be taught early but informally. Infants and toddlers can be exposed to math words and concepts so that when it is time to formally learn math, the foundation is

already there. Learning is Everywhere is a resource with activities that align with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards, including mathematical concepts.

Resources:

[papromiseforchildren.com/learning-is-everywhere](http://papromiseforchildren.com/learning-is-everywhere)

<http://letstalkqualitypa.com/>