

The Baby Signs® Program

FOSTERING INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT:

There's More to Math than Counting!

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When most parents think about the development of mathematical skills during the first three years, they to focus on learning to count—and there's no doubt that counting is a critical component. However, there's more to math than just counting, even during the earliest years.

One example of a math-relevant skill that parents often overlook is the ability to compare and contrast things that different in amount or size—that is, judgments about which one has more or which one is bigger. This skill is particularly easy for you to help your child work on as you go about your daily activities. Just keep your eyes open for situations where items differ in either amount or size—and ask your child to make a judgment. Here are some examples:

- While walking along the beach or in the snow, ask “Which footprint is bigger?”
- While involving your child in simple cooking projects, ask “Which cup holds more water?”
- While reading a bedtime book, ask “Which page shows more flowers?”
- When choosing a shirt for your child to wear, ask “Which shirt has more buttons?”
- When helping your child pick up stuffed animals or dolls, challenge him with “Let's put them on the shelf in order from biggest to smallest.”

And don't overlook the usefulness of stories like the *Three Little Pigs* or *The Three Bears* which explicitly involve comparisons. Think about it. Papa Bear, Mama Bear, and Baby Bear all had things that differed in size or amount. The enduring popularity is testimony to the fact that children actually enjoy learning to compare and contrast.

There you have it....Just a simple tip to make supporting your child's development of mathematical skills a bit easier and more fun!

Here are a few simple math signs to use with your children.



Up



In



Down



Out



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