

Treasure Hunt

Kindergarten-Grade 1

Once children begin school, math-related activities at home can help to reinforce what they are learning about numbers and arithmetic operations such as addition and subtraction, as well as reinforce classification skills and mathematical reasoning.

What You Need

- * Large container
- * Buttons, bottle caps, old keys or any other small items that you can count

What to Do

- * As a rainy day activity, place the items in the container and give it to your child. Have him sort and classify items into piles: keys, buttons and so forth. Then have him explain how the items in each pile are alike and how they are different. For example, some buttons may be big and some small; some keys may be silver-colored and some gold-colored.
- * Have your child choose one of the piles and organize the items in it by one characteristic, such as length. Have him lay the items end to end then compare and contrast what he sees. For example, how many short keys? long keys?
- * Next, ask your child to use the items in another pile of items to solve simple math problems. Try problems such as the following:
 - If you have 10 bottle caps and give me two, how many bottle caps do you have left?
 - If you have three big buttons and three small ones, how many buttons do you have altogether?
- * Create activities that challenge your child to use mathematical reasoning. Ask him, for example, to look closely at items and answer questions such as the following:
 - Is a gold-colored key always heavier than a silver-colored one?
 - Do the big buttons always have more holes than the smaller ones?

Keeping the tone of math activities light will increase the likelihood that children will want to do them and make the activities seem less like “homework.”