

# Building math skills

## Tips for grade 2 parents

- Put out eight buttons and ask your child, "How many buttons are there?" Take three away and ask, "How many are there now?" You could continue this with variations to determine how your child's understanding of numbers is developing.
- Count to 10 by twos, to 24 by threes, to 30 by fives.
- Makeup problems around math facts such as  $5+5=10$ . For example, if 5 boys are joined by 5 girls, there are 10 children.
- Another way to see how well your child understands numbers is to play board games that call for markers to be moved forward and backwards so many spaces. For example, "Now you can move six spaces forward." Chess, which involves strategy as well as mathematics, would be a good game to introduce to second graders.
- Ask your child to use a ruler to measure something in the house a rectangular table, a room, a bookshelf. You will learn a good deal about your child's measurement skills.
- With counters (buttons, game pieces, or the like) at hand, ask what three plus six equals, what eight minus five equals, whether three sets of four are greater or less than five sets of two.
- Telling time is an important skill. Occasionally ask your child, "Can you see what time it is?" Your child should be able to give you the time in hours and minutes.
- While you are getting ready for a walk, ask your child, "How long will it take us to walk around the block? From the corner to the park?" Questions like these arise in many different circumstances. The answers will show you how your child understands time.
- There are many opportunities for counting during everyday activities. While cooking you could ask, "Can you count out eight potatoes?" Or ask, "Can you put ten cookies and four apples on the plate for dessert?"

- While cooking or baking, ask your child to put in some of what the recipe calls for: three and a half tablespoons of sugar, two and a quarter cups of flour, and the like. This is a good way to see your child put math to use.

Reprinted from 101 Educational Conversations with Your 2nd Grader by Vito Perrone, published by Chelsea House Publishers.

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