

Tips for Early Math and Science Skills

Suggested Ages 3 - 5



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a Brain Building Moment™!

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Bathtime Experiments

Let your child explore measuring in the bath. Use clean and empty plastic containers of various shapes and sizes. Comment on what they're doing, "You scooped so much water, it overflowed!" and ask questions like, "Which one holds more? Is your cup empty or full?"

Tip # 333

Brainy Background

When you ask your child to think about and plan for the future, you're asking them to use critical thinking and reasoning skills, which are important for learning and life. When they feel a sense of control, they build confidence in their abilities.

Suggested Age 3—5 years

Air Draw

Ask your child to watch your finger as you draw a shape in the air. Start with something simple, like a circle. Can they guess what it is? Make it harder and draw more complicated shapes, like a heart or a star. Then have them take a turn drawing and you take a turn guessing.

Tip # 127

Brainy Background

Your child has to use self-control to focus only on your finger drawing in the air. Being able to use focus is critical to learning and staying motivated to reach a goal. Everyday use of shapes and symbols supports math skills too.

Suggested Age 4—5 years

Number Hunt

Invite your child to go on an indoor number hunt. Ask them to see how many fours they can find. Can they find the numbers one through 10? Where are the places in the house to find numbers? What kinds of things have numbers on them?

Tip # 906

Brainy Background

Your child is practicing early math skills of being able to identify numbers and count. Playing this game shows them the importance of using math in everyday life. It also supports their memory and focus as they look for details and remembers the rules of the game.

Suggested Age 3—5 years

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Prepare a Pattern

Do you have a muffin tin or an empty egg carton? Look for things that can fit inside each hole, like pen caps. Make a pattern, like one red cap in a hole, then two blue caps in another, then another red cap. Then give the caps to your child. Can they match the pattern?

Tip # 908

Brainy Background

Making and re-creating patterns asks your child to focus and keep the pattern in mind, even when it isn't there anymore. Being able to recognize patterns is an important skill for math, science, and language learning.

Suggested Age 4—5 years

Nature Patterns

Have your child collect items like rocks and leaves. Arrange them in a pattern such as one rock, two leaves, one rock, two leaves. Then mix them up and ask your child to recreate your pattern. Can they remember the order? Have them take a turn making a simple pattern for you to remember.

Tip # 199

Brainy Background

Finding and repeating patterns builds focus and memory. It is a great way to make connections and solve problems. These are all important skills for learning. Playing with patterns also builds math skills like comparing sizes, numbers, and shapes.

Suggested Age 3—4 years

Everyday Science

Is your child noticing lots of things, like the icicles melt when the weather gets warmer and puddles dry up? Turn them into science experiments! Try taking an ice cube out of the freezer and see what happens to it in the warm room, or put a small bowl of water out and see how long it takes to disappear.

Tip # 931

Brainy Background

Children learn like scientists—by paying attention to their experiences and developing ideas about what is going on. By encouraging them to create experiments, you're promoting curiosity, scientific thinking, and learning.

Suggested Age 3—5 years

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Tube Towers

Collect used, clean toilet paper tubes and encourage your child to build a tall tower with them. Ask them questions like, "How many tubes can you stack until the tower falls over? What can you do to help the tower stay up?" Talk about their ideas and what happens as they test them out.

Tip # 955

Brainy Background

When you encourage your child to test out their ideas and answer questions about what they're doing, you're helping them build important critical thinking and problem-solving skills. You're also supporting and motivating them when you're involved in and curious about what they're learning.

Suggested Age 3—5 years

Cup Tower

You don't need much to build fun things around the house. Grab a few plastic cups and stack them into a tower and then show your child how fun it is to knock them all down. Hand the cups over and let them have a go. Take turns building all kinds of new towers!

Tip # 779

Brainy Background

Supporting children as they explore and discover will help them become learners for life. This game also helps them learn how the physical world around them works. Chat back-and-forth about their discoveries!

Suggested Age 2—5 years

Sense Scape

Outside with your child? Name one of the senses like "see" or "hear." Encourage them to share everything they notice with that sense, like the sun shining or birds chirping. Then it's their turn to say one of the senses and your turn to share what you notice. Take turns using all your senses.

Tip # 206

Brainy Background

When your child takes the time to slow down and notice what is going on around them, they're using skills like focus and self-control. Being able to pay attention, manage behavior, and follow rules are important skills for learning in school and in life.

Suggested Age 4—5 years

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