

Steps to School

Your Source for Kindergarten Readiness in Durham County

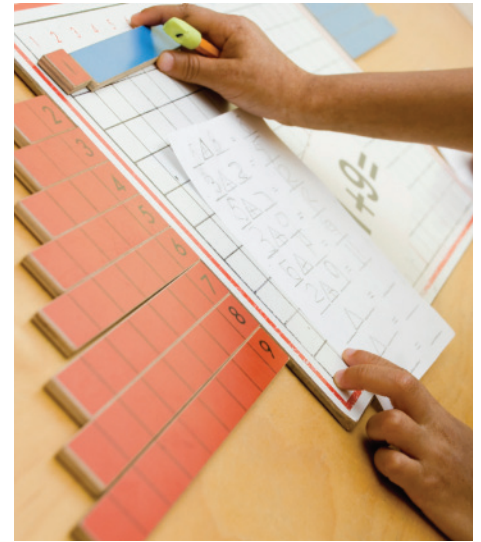
Steps to School—Math Issue

Welcome to the fall edition of the Steps to School newsletter. The Steps to School newsletter is written to support parents as you prepare your child for kindergarten. Each issue focuses on a different part of early learning and includes information, activities, events, and resources. This issue provides information on early learning in math.



Math is Everywhere!

During kindergarten, children work to build a strong math foundation that will support their learning through high school and beyond. You are your child's first math teacher and can give them a head-start on the math skills they will need. Children are natural learners, curious to learn about the world around them. They may have lots of questions about the world and why things happen. Helping nurture this curiosity and talking together will help your child's thinking skills develop.



Steps to Build Early Math Skills

- 1. Communicating.** When you talk and listen to your child you are helping them learn to communicate. Talking helps children think about what they know and what they are learning to help make sense of what is in their head. Children can also communicate through pictures, songs, and motions.
- 2. Problem Solving.** In math we learn there are many ways to solve problems and problems can have more than one answer. When you and your child problem solve together you are building her early math skills. Ask your child simple problems and listen to her answer. Let him create problems for you to solve, too. Share how you found the solution to his problem.
- 3. Reasoning.** When children listen to a problem and find a solution they are using reasoning skills. You can help build reasoning skills by asking your child questions and listening to the answers. Ask your child "why" questions and help them check the answers.
- 4. Connections.** Everyday we solve math problems using numbers, shapes, colors, or measurement. Ask children to find three red apples in the grocery store or count how many forks you will need for dinner. Let your child measure how many steps it takes to get to the car or hunt for blue items in your home. When children begin to see that math is all around them it will boost their confidence about their own learning.

Source: U.S. Department of Education: *Early Childhood: Where Learning Begins - Mathematics*

Patterns—Patterns are things that repeat over and over again. Patterns can be made from objects (like shoes and socks), from motions (snap, clap, snap, clap), or from letters, words, or numbers. Once you begin to look, patterns are everywhere and can be made with anything. When you're at home, use items such as pencils and pens, socks and shoes, or books and pillows to make simple patterns together. Look for patterns on clothing or in stores. As your child begins to understand the concepts of patterning, try letting your child create and extend their own patterns.

Numbers—Even if your child hasn't learned to read or write their numbers yet, it is never too early to begin learning how to count. Children can count anything! Your child can count how many pieces of mail were in the mailbox, how many shoes you have, how many pillows are in the house or how many red cars you see during a walk. Nursery rhymes and counting songs can help students develop a strong number understanding.

Shapes—Children love to learn about shapes and shapes are all around us. We see windows shaped like rectangles, coins shaped like circles, pizza slices shaped like triangles, and signs shaped like squares. Try going on a shape hunt around your neighborhood. Look and see what shapes you and your child can find. For meals or snacks, think about foods that are different shapes. Crackers, grapes, oranges, cereal, granola bars or sandwiches can show all kinds of shapes. Yum!

Colors—One of the first things young children notice are colors. This week when you are driving in your car, walking around the house or in the grocery store, begin to make comments such as "that grass is green" or "that apple is yellow." In the morning, ask your child to find the blue shirt or the red pants. Go on a hunt around your home for different color objects. See who can find the most – you or your child.

Sorting—To succeed in math, children must learn to see the differences and similarities between items. Begin by sorting objects at home into groups. Take out your forks and spoons. Begin putting the forks into one pile and the spoons into another pile. See if your children can keep sorting the forks and spoons. Discuss together how you sorted the objects. You can teach your child to sort by color, size, shape, object, or texture. Try sorting crayons, clothing, kitchen tools, toys, buttons, coins, pasta, cereal, leaves or types of food.

Time—Using paper and crayons you and your child can make a calendar to hang in your child's room. Label the calendar with the month and days of the week and put any important events such as birthdays, holidays, or special events on the calendar. Help your child learn to read the calendar to learn the days of the week and months of the year.



Editors

The Steps to School Newsletter is a joint publication of Durham's Partnership for Children 919-403-6960 (www.dpfc.net) and Durham Public Schools 919-560-2000 (www.dpsnc.net/kindergarten), part of a collaborative Transition to Kindergarten Initiative.

Books about Math

Take a trip to your local library and look for math books.

How Much is a Million?

By David M. Schwartz

Bears Odd, Bears Even

By Harriet Ziefert

What Comes in 2's, 3's, and 4's?

By Suzanne Aker

12 Ways to Get to 11

By Eve Merriam

Anno's Counting Book

By Mitsumasa Anno

Ten Black Dots

By Donald Crews

Get Ready for Kindergarten!

Upcoming Events

Durham's Partnership for Children Holiday Book Drive

November 1 – December 31, 2010

Barnes & Noble Southpoint Mall
location

Community members can purchase books to benefit young children who might not otherwise have had access to books. Donated books will be distributed through Durham community agencies.

Magnet Fair

November 13, 2010

Hillside High School
9a.m.-12 p.m.

Showcase of Schools

November - December

Look on the Durham Public School's website for dates and times.

Kindergarten Welcome Session

January 13 or 25, 2010

Staff Development Center
6-7:30 p.m.

For more information on upcoming transition events, please contact Kate MacDonell at 919-560-9403 or visit the DPS Kindergarten website: www.dpsnc.net/kindergarten