

EARLY YEARS EXCHANGE -- MATHEMATICS IN THE EARLY YEARS

(Primary 2)

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I will begin by saying that to successfully guide children through a learning process in Mathematics, you must reason from a child's perspective and in humility. Note that most children learn better by doing, that is through play and hands-on practical experience rather than by listening. You therefore must vary your teaching methods and also make it fun!

The learning processes in the early years involves basically

- Number building such as counting, writing, identification, spelling. Type of numbers to be taught includes odd and even, cardinal /ordinal numbers and tally numbers systems.
- Basic operations of Numbers should include addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
- Developing the number system is key as other concepts will depend on this.
- Learning shapes helps in identification and organizing visual information, numbers and letters are understood by recognizing their shapes 1,2 3, A,B,C  Naming the shapes of everyday objects e.g tissue paper, meat-pie, banana, seasoning cubes, dice, door, ice-cream, tunnel, boxes, etc. familiarity with shapes will enhance the learning of geometry.
- Early learning of measurement will help the child to have an understanding of length, volume, and weight as attributes of objects before they can meaningfully compare and measure them.
- Early exposure to algebraic concepts reinforces logical thinking in a child, mastery in statistics and calculus. The critical thinker finds solution to problems e.g $4 + \square = 11$, algebra is useful around the house.
- Patterns provide a child with a sense of order in the midst of confusion. It helps the child make educated guesses, develop important skills of critical thinking and logic, see relationships and make predictions based on observations.
- Early learning of data analysis harnesses a child's curiosity and early critical thinking skills to answer some of their numerous questions like what food, game, toys do you like best? How many people are in your family, what's your favorite pet etc. children derive great joy in collecting, organizing and displaying data in form of tables or bar charts. Data analysis helps a child make lists of items and to determine and write how many of each.

By the time their foundations are solidly laid on the things the child can see, touch and manipulate, then such concepts can then transcend to abstract math or memorization.

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