

Marvelous Math Games IV

Family game night = plenty of opportunities to build math skills. Whether you're running around outside or quietly playing games indoors, your child will work with shapes, numbers, measurement, and more.



Guess my shape

Can your youngster spot and describe shapes in photos? With this game, he can help opponents figure out which shape is on his mind.

You'll need: old magazines or newspapers, scissors

1. Let your child cut out pictures from magazines or newspapers. Spread them out for everyone to see.
2. Take turns secretly thinking of a shape in a picture (say, a circle in a pizza ad), and give clues to get other players to name your shape. *Example:* "This tastes yummy and can be cut into wedges."
3. The first person to raise his hand and correctly name the shape and the object (circle, pizza) gets to pick the next shape and give clues.



Skip and count

Your youngster will enjoy skipping while she skip counts by 2s, 5s, and 10s.

You'll need: 10 craft sticks, marker, 2 cups

1. Have your child write 2, 5, and 10 on separate craft sticks and put them in 1 cup with the printed ends down. She should write a movement, such as skip, hop, tiptoe, or march, on each of the remaining 7 sticks and place them in the other cup.
2. On each turn, a player draws a stick from each cup, reads them, and returns them to their cups.
3. One stick tells her which number to skip count by (say, 2), and the other tells her how to move (skip). She should skip around while counting aloud for every 2 skips she does (2, 4, 6, 8).
4. Continue until every player has had a chance to count by 2s, 5s, and 10s at least once.

Line 'em up

Which is longer—6 erasers or 3 buttons? Estimate lengths accurately to win this game.

You'll need: 2 dice, 2 types of small household items (6 of each type)

1. The first player picks two types of objects to compare, such as pretzels and paper clips.
2. Then, he rolls the dice. The numbers rolled tell him how many of each item he gets. So if he rolled 2 and 5, he could take either 2 pretzels and 5 paper clips or 2 paper clips and 5 pretzels.
3. Now he predicts which group of objects, if lined up end to end, would be longer—2 pretzels or 5 paper clips? Once he chooses, he lines up the items to check. If he was correct, he gets 1 point.
4. Play 5 rounds. High score wins.

Variation: Play with 3 dice, and pick 3 types of objects.



continued

Race you to 20!

Give your child hands-on practice with addition and subtraction as you race to build 20-story block towers.

You'll need: 2 dice, masking tape, pen, Legos or other blocks

1. Put a square of masking tape on each side of 1 die. Write “+” on 4 sides and “-” on the other 2 sides.
2. Each player gets 20 Legos and builds a tower with 6 of them.
3. The first player rolls the dice. If she rolls + and 4, she adds 4 blocks to her tower and says the number sentence she made (“ $6 + 4 = 10$ ”). If she rolls - and 2, she'll subtract 2 blocks and announce, “ $6 - 2 = 4$.”
4. Players take turns rolling and adding to or subtracting from their tower. If someone doesn't have enough Legos to subtract (say, she has 2 and rolls a - and a 3), she removes all the blocks from her tower.
5. The first one to build a 20-story tower is the winner.



Grab odds or evens

This game lets your child pair up objects to “see” odd and even numbers.

You'll need: bowl with 20–50 of one type of small item (beans, macaroni, beads)

1. The first player grabs a handful of items and counts them. Is it an odd or even number? To figure it out, she should pair them up. If each object has a “partner,” it's an even number. But if there's one left over, it's an odd number.
2. Earn 1 point for an odd amount (since 1 is odd) and 2 points for an even amount (because 2 is even). Return the items to the bowl, and it's the next person's turn.
3. Score 10 points to win the game.

Fact family match-up

Make the most fact families to win! In a *fact family*, all of the facts are made up of the same three numbers, such as $2 + 3 = 5$, $3 + 2 = 5$, $5 - 3 = 2$, and $5 - 2 = 3$. Knowing 1 fact can help your youngster learn its “relatives” more easily.

You'll need: index cards, pencil, 2 dice

1. Number two sets of 12 index cards, 1–12 in each set. Lay the cards faceup within everyone's reach.
2. Take turns rolling the dice. The object is to find—and slap—a number that will form a fact family with the two numbers you roll. If your child rolls 4 and 6, he would slap 2 or 10 to complete a family.
3. Say all the facts in the family you made. If you slap 2, the facts would be $4 + 2 = 6$, $2 + 4 = 6$, $6 - 4 = 2$, and $6 - 2 = 4$. Slap 10, and the facts are $4 + 6 = 10$, $6 + 4 = 10$, $10 - 4 = 6$, and $10 - 6 = 4$. Then, keep the card. *Note:* If there's no card left that works, roll again.
4. Continue until all the cards are gone. The player with the most cards wins.

