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# Early Learning Parents' Pages

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING



## V. Mathematical Thinking

This summer there will be multiple opportunities to help your child learn new concepts, words and skills, including math skills. Children's development of mathematical understanding begins in the very first months of life and continues to grow as children interact with the world around them. For young children, math involves number knowledge, the awareness of patterns, sizes and shapes and the relationship between objects.

Patterns help children make sense of the world by breaking and sorting information into meaningful "chunks," allowing them to create new understandings. What is a pattern? Patterns are repeated arrangements, like stripes on a sweater or the numbers 2, 4, 6, 8. A pattern can be made up of numbers, pictures, sounds, words, colors or shapes.

Patterns can be found in nature. While on a walk, children can explore the patterns they see around them, like the shapes, colors and designs on leaves. Children can also encounter patterns in language through rhymes, and sound patterns with musical instruments, chants and songs.

Patterns help children learn to make predictions, understand what might come next, and create relationships between numbers, shapes and images. By noticing similarities and differences within a pattern, children will gain new ideas for how objects might be classified or develop a new procedure for solving a problem.

The [Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards](#) available on the Division of Early Learning's website provide activities and examples of ways to develop your child's understanding of patterns and support your child's growing math skills.



## Mathematics Pattern Activity

One way children learn is by observing and interacting with their environment. There are many math activities you can do with your child using objects from their environment, such as counting, sorting by colors, learning number words, and identifying shapes and patterns.

Here are two fun pattern activities you can do with your child:

### Fruit Patterns

1. Select two types of fruits that you can use to make a pattern.
2. Create a pattern with the fruit: orange, banana, orange, banana.
3. Tell your child that you have made a pattern and state the pattern. Point to the fruit and state the type of fruit as you point.
4. Ask your child these questions:
  - What fruit comes first in the pattern?
  - What fruit comes second?
5. Help your child decide what fruit would come next in the pattern.
6. Assist your child with creating a new pattern.

### Block Patterns

1. Find a set of blocks or other objects that come in multiple colors.
2. Create a pattern with the blocks using two colors: blue, blue, yellow, blue, blue, yellow.
3. Tell your child that you have made a pattern and state the pattern. Point to the blocks and state their color.
4. Ask your child these questions:
  - What block would come next?
  - What would happen if I took away one block? Would there still be a pattern?
  - Can you create a pattern using the red and green blocks?

Turn everyday moments into math moments! Cooking with your child or making a quick snack is another way to incorporate math.

Use Jell-O and an ice cube tray for a fun number sense activity. Have your child assist you in making the Jell-O according to package directions and pour into an ice cube tray. Once set, use the Jell-O mold to practice math concepts and talk about numbers.

Your child may:

- Say or use sign language to indicate they want more.
- Hold up fingers to show how many Jell-O cubes they have.
- Count aloud how many cubes they have left to enjoy.





Florida was one of the first states to offer free prekindergarten for all 4-year-olds. The Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK) prepares early learners for success in kindergarten and beyond. VPK helps build a solid foundation for school, using educational materials corresponding to various stages in a child’s development.

**Research shows children who take part in high-quality prekindergarten programs:**

- ✓ Perform better on standardized tests.
- ✓ Have better school attendance rates.
- ✓ Develop lifelong skills.
- ✓ Are less likely to drop out of school.

[Click here to apply for VPK today!](#)

**Parent choice is a VPK priority.**

Children who live in Florida and are 4 on or before September 1 of the school year can enroll. Parents whose children are born between February 2 and September 1 of the calendar year may delay enrolling their 4-year-old until the following year, when their child is 5.



Looking for an early learning child care provider for your child can be a journey. The Division of Early Learning provides consumer education materials for your family to use when visiting a new provider. Every program will have positive features, but only you can decide what is most important. The *Quality Checklist for Child Care Centers and Preschools* and the *Quality Checklist for Family Child Care Homes* can help you make the best choice for your child’s first early learning experience.

The Quality Checklists include sections dedicated to health and safety to help your family determine what questions to ask and what to look for during a visit to a child care center. The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) and local licensing agencies provide inspection reports on health and safety compliances. You can find these child care inspection reports and other resources on the [DCF Cares website](#). While you are searching for a provider, think about the type of early learning experience you would like for your child.

The Quality Checklists help you feel confident you made the best decision for your child and family. You can find the full version of the quality checklists here: <https://bit.ly/QualityChecklists>.



**Florida’s School Readiness Program works to:**

- Prepare young children to start kindergarten ready to learn.
- Help working families afford quality early learning services.
- Keep parents in the workforce and/or participating in educational or training activities.
- Help families become financially independent.
- Provide parents information about child development and family well-being.

 High-quality early learning environments make a difference in children’s lifelong academic and social success.

## Summer Adventures

This summer, your library card will allow you to explore fun adventures! Check out a Real Florida State Park Day Pass available at your local library. This day pass will provide park admission for up to eight people in one vehicle. You and your child can spend time reading and learning all about Florida's wildlife, horticulture and natural resources then bring it all to life as you explore one of Florida's 175 state parks. The Real Florida Reader program will last until September 12, 2022, and all you need is your library card. If you do not currently have a library card, you can sign up for one at your local library. For more information visit: [The Real Florida Reader | Florida State Parks.](#)



Remember any time is math time. Use the ideas below to incorporate math into your outdoor adventure!

- Hold your child's hand and count steps from tree spot to another.
- While exploring, have your child find one stick, two rocks and three leaves, then have your child count them one by one.
- Use the items collected to create a pattern such as rock, leaf, rock, leaf.

## 2022 Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday!

Spanning 14 days, Floridians will have a sales tax holiday for clothing, footwear, and backpacks with a sales price of \$100 or less; school supplies and learning aids with a sales price of \$50 or less; and personal computers or computer-related accessories, including non-recreational software, with a sales price of \$1,500 or less.



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