

Tip Sheet #14

## READING GREAT BOOKS ABOUT MATH

**Books about math don't have to be stuffy! Think of math as a language that uses numbers, letters, and other symbols to describe relationships. Children who master the uses of symbols can become both readers and mathematicians.**

**You can support your child's math learning by reading books together about basic math concepts. Encourage the use of math symbols, and help your child create patterns with those symbols in art projects and imaginary play.**

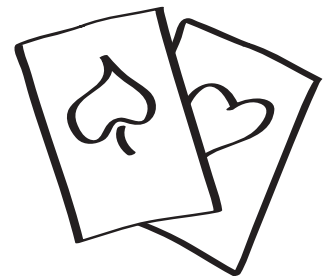
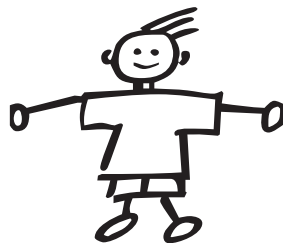
*Try These Great Books and Strategies!*

- Mitsumasa Anno's wordless picture books are perfect for young children. They also develop math concepts that older children enjoy, too. Start with **Anno's Counting Book** (HarperCollins Canada, 1992) and **Anno's Magic Seeds** (Puffin USA, 1999). As your child grows, dip into **The Mysterious Multiplying Jar** (Philomel Books, 2002).
- Read **How Much Is a Million?** by David Schwartz (HarperTrophy, 2004). This book helps children understand how big "one million" is, and tells a delightful story about a magician whose specialty is math. Young readers begin to learn how to make predictions as they read along.
- Jon Scieszka's **Math Curse** (Viking Children's Books, 2007) is lots of fun for readers. When the teacher announces, "You know, you can think of almost everything as a math problem," a young girl discovers just how true that statement is! Children will enjoy thinking about how they use math every day in different ways.
- Estimating and counting skills get a boost when you read **The Grapes of Math** by Greg Tang (Scholastic Books, 2004). Your young reader will learn easy ways to count complicated patterns—such as the number of seeds on a strawberry or the number of humps on a camel—using creativity and common sense.
- **The Best of Times: Math Strategies That Multiply** by Greg Tang (Scholastic, 2002) is a wonderful picture book that helps young readers learn multiplication tables through rhymes, raps, and puzzles.
- Humorous songs that layer verses and numbers together help young readers grow fond of counting. Download and sing together lyrics and music to such songs as "The Ants Go Marching One by One," "There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly," "The Twelve Days of Christmas," and "Over in the Meadow."
- Older readers enjoy reading instruction books for card games. Let your child make up card games, and play them together.

1 2  
3 2



- Use cards to play matching games, addition and subtraction games, and games that involve ordering numbers from least to greatest.
- Play memory games with paired cards placed upside down to encourage mastery of number and card suit symbols. By “holding” the numbers in their hands, children become comfortable with the symbols one through 10.
- Supply your young reader and math student with plenty of scrap paper. When kids first work hard to learn letter and number shapes, they need time and materials to practice, over and over. Let your child use as much scrap paper as needed.
- Don't forget opportunities for math play every day:
  - Look for patterns in license plates during family “drive time.”
  - Form patterns with lines and rows of toys.
  - Use a roll of nonstick painter's tape to create math symbols on the floor.
  - Use sidewalk chalk for writing simple math problems on the walkway of driveway outside.
  - Help your child learn to read and cook from simple recipes, which gives a level of comfort with fractions and ratios. And kids love to eat their creations!
- Finally, kids love secret codes. Make up a simple code with your young reader. Send special messages to each other. Create a vocabulary with stars, hearts, circles, flowers, and so on. Children don't realize that mastering codes can be an entry point into the world of algebra, which they'll learn in the later primary years.



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