



Math Moments

In every classroom, at any time during the day, the potential for a "math moment" exists. The room is one big learning center where strands of mathematical discovery are continually being woven. Children learn to make sense of their world through everyday experiences.

To stimulate a math moment, teachers use a variety of materials and ideas to create an environment in which children explore math concepts. In the math center are board games, puzzles, matching and guessing games, dominoes, cards, pattern blocks and collections of objects that give children opportunities to recognize numbers and build math skills.

But math moments do not occur only in the math center. Look around our room... In the block center, children construct houses, towers, parking garages, bedrooms, etc. (by sorting and organizing) and use words like long, short, and tall. When a child brings a birthday treat, s/he passes out one napkin per child and the same number of treats for each person. We take attendance and keep track of how many days we've been in school. When the class votes on what stories to read or for some other decision, children compare quantities. When we clean up the room we sort toys and writing materials into appropriate tubs and containers - felts with felts, crayons with crayons, animals with animals, cars with cars, etc.

Parents can accept the challenge to find math moments at home and about town. With your child, identify numbers and shapes in your junk mail. As you cook or run errands together, you can make comments or ask questions that encourage meaningful math understandings. For instance, "We need a bottle of juice for each person in the family and your friend Sally, too. How many shall I get?" When shopping ask your child to find products that are sold in groups of 5 or 10 or 100... or see how many places you can find the number 3 or 5 or 7... Children love to be consulted on such issues! Just keep it all in fun!

Letter borrowed from Tracy Fulton, New Westminster School District