

**How to use the Blog Posts**

Each week’s blog post will address one big idea of preschool math. Since preschool math skills in different content areas (number sense, measurement, geometry, etc.) often develop at the same time, the Playful Invitations can be practiced in any order. There is no recipe for the order of learning math, however, some skills build upon others. Use observation and your knowledge of the child to determine if something is appropriate or not.

Determine what to teach:

* At the bottom of the blog are ways to decide if a child is **Ready** for the activity. If the child does not have the prerequisite skills listed under **Ready** then practice those before introducing the big idea described in the blog post.
* If the child does well with the Playful Invitation described in the post, and is **Ready to move on**, **Extend** his/her learning using the suggested ideas.
* If the Playful Invitation described in the post provides just enough of a challenge then use open-ended questions and modeling to support his/her learning. See below how to facilitate math play and learning.
* Remember sometimes children do not have the language to express what they know. Observing their actions (what they do) may help you to determine their level of knowledge (what they know).

Prepare the Environment:

* Read through the blog post and intentionally prepare the environment so it is inviting to children. Be sure you have everything you need ahead of time, so you do not interrupt your interaction.
* Use natural materials listed or similar materials found in your environment. It is not always important to use the exact material shown in the images.
* Children are not included in the images on the blog posts in order to focus solely on the materials and setup of the invitation.
* Begin by allowing the child to play/explore the materials and their properties before you teach. Children need to be familiar with materials before they are asked to use them in a mathematical way.

Facilitating math play and learning:

* Read through the Playful Invitation section. Suggested questions and comments are in italics. This is not a script. Use natural conversation and observations to guide what you say.
* Model mathematical thinking. Think out loud as you show the child how to problem solve or practice the skill. Gradually lessen the amount of modeling you do and increase the amount of open-ended questions you ask to determine their thinking. (This is called Scaffolding- when the parent/teacher gradually reduces the amount of support they provide so children become more independent.)
* Use the Invitation to Play Documentation Tool to record observations from your interaction, the child’s interest, and his/her ability. Use reflection as a guide for future teaching.

The blog posts are simply suggestions. There are MANY ways to develop these math skills. My hope is that reading the blog will inspire you to find opportunities in your daily life to teach math to preschool children.

**If it is playful, meaningful, and reasonably challenging then chances are the learning will stick!**