

I'm not a bot



Preschool math games

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Count these out loud together as kids touch the beads on their Pipe Cleaner Counters. Provide a plastic tub of sand with a pre-determined number of playing cards "buried" in the sand. Also have a sheet of paper with numbers matching the cards. A student will dig for and find a card, then place it next to the matching number on the sheet. Of course students can use their hands to dig, but plastic shovels, plastic spoons, or tongs might add to the fun. So simple but so fun! Who doesn't love to play with balloons? Students will need a balloon and a die. Students roll the die and then bounce their balloon that number of times without letting it touch the ground. Sarah Cason for We Are Teachers Getting hands-on with preschool math games and counting with cubes is a great way to get a "feel" for math. Give students a pair of dice and blocks, LEGO bricks, or Unifix Cubes. Students roll one die and build a tower with that number of blocks or cubes. 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Pair up students and give them an un-numbered 10-space grid. Also have them each pick a small plastic animal from a set you can easily find at the dollar store. Players roll a die and move their animal that many spaces on the grid. BUT to get to the 10th and last space, they must roll the exact number. This activity has kids sorting and then building. First, create the "monsters" by gathering four or five lunch-size paper bags. Use card stock in colors that will match the colors of the blocks, LEGO bricks, or cubes. Make "monster" faces with googly eyes, markers, pencils, and other craft materials. Attach the monster face onto the paper bags, then cut out a mouth of a size the blocks can fit through. Now the kids will feed the monsters blocks by matching the block color to the monster face color. Once all the blocks have been fed to the monsters, the students will empty the "monster bag," count the blocks, and build something of their choice with that color block. 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Students begin to walk or hop around the room until the teacher stops the music. Then students find someone nearby to pair up with. They compare their paper plates, counting dots and comparing which one has more and which one has less. The teacher asks each pair to verbalize what they found out, and then the music and march starts again. Sarah Cason for We Are Teachers Learning to recognize numbers is a key early math objective. Here's one of the simple preschool math games to practice that idea. Get a small number of Uno game cards—start with eight and put in matching pairs. Turn the cards face down and let pairs of students take turns flipping over two cards per turn hoping for a match. You can either play so that when they get a match, their turn is over, or when they get a match, they go again. Draw the shapes you want your student to practice on separate sheets of card stock. You can also write the shape name. Spread these out on the floor. Have the students hunt in the room for items that are that shape, and put the items on or near that corresponding shape sheet. You can see patterns, you can make patterns, and you can also hear patterns. Using clapping, tapping, and snapping fingers, the teacher/leader sounds out a pattern and the kids follow along and join in. For example, you might do three claps, two taps on the floor, three claps, two taps on the floor. After everyone joins in successfully, stop and ask someone to describe the pattern in words. Extend the patterns when the students seem ready for more complex ones. Then let students take a turn leading. Discuss with students how a pattern always repeats. Red, blue is not a pattern until it repeats. On the whiteboard, draw a pattern using shapes. For example, you might draw square, square, square, circle, square, square, circle. Have students come up and draw the continuation of the pattern. Make the patterns more complex when students seem ready for more complex patterns. This can also be done with colors (of the same shape). For example, draw dots on the board: blue, green, green, red; blue, green, green, red, and have students come up and continue the pattern. In this activity, students physically record a listening pattern with blocks. Gather the class in a circle. Explain that you will clap and snap a pattern and that students will make it in front of them using blocks. A blue block is a clap. A red block is a snap. If you make a pattern that is clap, snap, clap, snap, students would put out blue, red, blue, red. Put a pile of blocks in the center. Clap and snap a pattern while the students build it. When done, ask students to explain why they built the pattern they did. Try a few more and then let students take turns leading. Sarah Cason for We Are Teachers This activity emphasizes counting but also lays the foundation for subtraction. 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Put a large number of shapes cut from different colors of construction paper in the center of the table. Ask students to create a pattern around the edge of their sheet of construction paper with two colors or two shapes to form a frame. In the middle of the frame, draw a picture. If you work small, you can make several of these with different frame patterns. Give each student a prepared card or strip of card stock with a pattern on it. The pattern could be of shapes (all the same color) or the pattern could be only colors (all the same shape). Give students a whiteboard or other erasable surface to copy the pattern and continue it. Draw a numeral several times on the board. Instruct very specifically exactly how the numeral is drawn. Students use their pointer finger to trace the number in the air, then trace it on their palm, and then on their desks, repeating the teacher's specific instructions out loud. Then give each student a paper plate with rice, salt, or sand to trace in. 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