



# 9 Ways *to Make Math Fun (Seriously!)*

Math is actually one of the subjects parents inquire about most at [Sylvan](#), so we compiled a list of games and resources to help parents make math fun for their kids.

## 1. Count.

Just as you played the “let’s-find-as-many-B-letters-as-we-can” game in the car when she was just learning to read, you can do the same with numbers. Determine the number you’re going to be looking for today – on a walk, at the grocery, in the pediatrician’s office, in the car. Or, count whatever you two decide on – the mere act of counting raises a child’s math awareness. Count seashells at the beach, red bicycles, cocker spaniels, home team football logos. If you’re really ambitious and can count that high, count the ads in a half-hour of TV watching. Celebrate with hugs and high fives when you reach a “big” number.

## 3. Compute.

Make it light and nonchalant, but ask for help figuring out a household math question. “How many peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches are we going to need for lunch when your friends are here tomorrow?”

## 2. Estimate.

When you’re playing the counting game, ask ahead of time for your child to “guess” how many number-4’s, cocker spaniels, or seashells she’ll see. Make a big deal when she gets close. Explain that when this guess is based on prior experience or knowledge, it’s called an estimate. Then, estimate how long it will take to drive to Grandma’s, how long breakfast will take, how often a phone will ring tonight. Celebrate with hugs and high fives when she comes close.



## 4. Explore.

Look for various math-related objects, like shapes and patterns, when you're out and about. Squares, circles, rectangles, for example. Or patterns in the windows of a high-rise building, the plantings in a landscape, the tiles in a floor, or the arrangement of colors in an article of clothing. Recognizing patterns helps with future math – counting by threes, for example, or learning multiplication.

## 5. Read.

There are some fun workbooks that inject plenty of silliness and laughs into math learning. Sylvan has some great ones [here!](#)

## 6. Play.

A creative adult can find some math in just about any game. Some obvious places to start are cards, dominoes, dice (which some math teachers call, cleverly, “math cubes”), Chutes & Ladders, Monopoly, and other games that encourage counting. Jigsaw puzzles are excellent for learning about patterns. Don't forget puzzles like Sudoku, which may require some teamwork.

## 7. Browse.

The internet has plenty of sites for math fun. Browse for some good ones. We like [Cool Math 4 Kids](#) for its variety and [Learning Games for Kids](#) for its printable stuff. Good for rainy days or for when they say they have no homework.



## 8. Learn.

There are lots of websites that have grown-up stuff, too, like research and suggestions for further learning. Educate yourself at the [National Council of Teachers of Mathematics'](#) website or at the [U.S. Department of Education's](#) website.

## 9. Be a good role model.

Show your kids that math is more than just a school subject. Let them see you doing math in the kitchen, in the garage, in the grocery store, at a restaurant. If you disliked math in school, keep it to yourself. They don't need “permission” to dislike it, too. That's not an option in today's world.

*Have fun.* Just as you want reading to be fun, help make math fun for your child by taking it out of the textbook and inserting it into their everyday life.



*Emily Levitt*

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