

How-To Make Tools for Teaching Basic Math and Reading

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Materials for addition and subtraction bags:

- Plastic bag with locking top
- Tape of any color: masking tape, electrician's tape, washi tape or thin strip of duct tape
- Scissors to cut the tape
- Dried beans (or use any other small objects you have that can be scooted around inside the bag.)
- Paper and pencil to write number sentences

To divide the bag in half: cut a strip of tape about the same width as the bag and place it across the middle. Then add the number of beans you want to practice and close the bag. Your child will add or subtract by moving the beans above or below the line made by the tape.

To practice adding say to your child: "How many beans above the line?" "How many beans below the line?" "Count how many beans altogether." Repeat each number sentence together, for example: "Four plus three equals seven." Have them write it on a piece of paper: $4 + 3 = 7$. Then switch it up and do $3 + 4 = 7$.

To practice subtracting leave all the beans on one side of the tape. Say: "Count how many beans are in the bag." Have your child move some beans to the other side of the tape then ask how many are left. Repeat the number sentence together: " $7 - 1 = 6$ ". Have your child write out the numbers.

Materials for word families reading practice:

- Regular 8.5 x 11 paper, if you have any thick paper like card stock that will work best
- Loose leaf rings if you have them otherwise try paperclips, twist ties, ribbon, etc.
- Hole punch
- Marker
- Scissors

Search for 'word families list' on the internet. Fold an 8.5" x 11" piece of paper in half three times. This divides the paper into 8 equal boxes. Write a word in each box and cut along the lines. You can punch a hole in one corner and hang the words on a loose leaf ring, etc. If you don't have a hole punch, just keep each word family together with a paper clip.

When you practice reading with your child, mention that these will be rhyming words. Help them sound out the letters: "C-A-T, cat." Point out that the next word also has "AT" at the end and help them sound out the first letter "S-A-T, sat" With a little help they should catch on to sounding out the first letter(s) and adding the familiar ending. Have fun with it and make silly sentences like: The fat cat sat on a rat.