

Addition and Subtraction at a Glance

What Are Addition and Subtraction?

Addition involves increasing the number of objects in a set by joining objects. Subtraction involves decreasing the amount by separating a set into two or more smaller groups or taking some objects away from the initial set. Young children can solve simple addition and subtraction problems involving joining and separating small sets of objects and reasoning about the total after the operation.

Why Is Learning About Addition and Subtraction Important?

Addition and subtraction with small sets prepare children to later add and subtract larger quantities and to learn about other math topics, including multiplication and division. Multiplication can be thought of as repeated addition and division can be thought of as repeated subtraction.

What Do Children Need to Know About Addition and Subtraction?

- Adding means putting numbers or sets of objects together and getting more (unless you are adding zero).
- You can use counting to see how many there are all together.
- You can add in any order.
- Subtracting means taking away so you end up with less (unless you are taking away zero).
- After some objects have been taken away, you can count what's left over to get the answer.
- Children can understand addition and subtraction without learning addition or subtraction facts, and without learning the plus (+) or minus (-) signs.

How Can We Help Children Learn Addition and Subtraction?

Talk About Addition and Subtraction Throughout the Day

While helping children add and subtract concrete objects (for example, bear counters), use words and phrases such as: all together, how many in all, put together, add, take away, subtract, how many are left, and how many more. Or ask questions: "If I gave you two more bears, how many would you have?"

Ideas for Exploring Addition and Subtraction During: Centers/Small Groups

Hidden Objects: One student hides some objects and another student must figure out how many were hidden by subtracting the remaining objects from the total.

Guided Small Groups

Big Fish Story: Children add or subtract fish to act out a story their teacher tells them about fish swimming into the ocean or getting eaten by a shark!

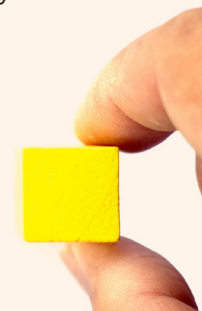
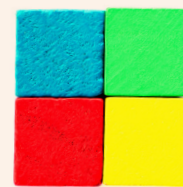
Math Moments

Find the Number Using Operations: While waiting to start an activity, have children try to figure out what number you're thinking about by using operations.

How Can We Support Learning About Addition and Subtraction at Home?

Encourage families to read picture books about addition and subtraction

Children can count the total number of objects in the illustrations when more items are added or count how many are left when some objects are taken away. For example, when reading "Baby Goes to Market" by Atinuke, parents can ask children to predict how many food items will remain after the baby eats one on each page.



Count to see how many are left after taking one away.