

Math Games

Benefits of Building a Math Game Library for Use at Home

The advantages of using board games are well documented. These include:

- Meaningful situations for the application of mathematical skills are created by games
- Motivation - children freely choose to participate and enjoy playing
- Positive attitude - Games provide opportunities for building self-concept and developing positive attitudes towards mathematics, through reducing the fear of failure and error
- Increased learning - in comparison to more formal activities, greater learning can occur through games due to the increased interaction between children, opportunities to test intuitive ideas and problem solving strategies
- Different levels - Games can allow children to operate at different levels of thinking and to learn from each other. In a group of children playing a game, one child might be encountering a concept for the first time, another may be developing his/her understanding of the concept, a third consolidating previously learned concepts
- Assessment - children's thinking often becomes apparent through the actions and decisions they make during a game, so it is possible to diagnose and assess learning in a non-threatening situation
- Independence - Children can work independently of the teacher. The rules of the game and the children's motivation usually keep them on task.

Few language barriers - an additional benefit becomes evident when children from non-english-speaking backgrounds are involved. The basic structures of some games are common to many cultures, and the procedures of simple games can be quickly learned through observation. Children who are reluctant to participate in other mathematical activities because of language barriers will often join in a game, and so gain access to the mathematical learning as well as engage in structured social interaction.

