

Using Children's Literature to Enrich Mathematical Reasoning in Young Children

During the first reading give your child time to discover and enjoy the book. Let him savor the text and examine the illustrations.

Help your child make the connection to math activities he has been doing.

Examples:

"Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed" by Eileen Christelow.

Read the book as many times as your child wants you to read it. Be prepared, he'll want you to read it again and again.

When your child has fully enjoyed the book, engage him in the following activity.

Use five stuffed animals or other appropriate toys. Let your child use them to act out the story as you read it. Each time a monkey (toy) falls off the bed and you finish reading, "...and the doctor said, 'No more monkeys jumping on the bed!'", ask your child how many monkeys are still on the bed.

"The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle

Read the book one or two times and let your child discover its fun text and bright illustrations.

Before you read the book again.

You will need a calendar and a marker with a fine tip. Find a month when the first day of the month is on a Monday. Point to each day and corresponding number. For example, "This says Monday (point to the word Monday). It is the first (point to the number 1) day of September. This says Tuesday..."

As you read the book.

Encourage your child to point to each day as the caterpillar eats. Let him tell you how many of the food he ate. For example, point to the third day on the calendar. Ask him, "What is this number (tell him if he doesn't know)? Yes, it is the number three. How many plums did the caterpillar eat on Wednesday? (reread the text and/or let him count them as he points to each plum). That's right, three. You may put three dots on Wednesday (point to the word, Wednesday), the third day (point to the number 3), to represent the three plums." Do all the days.