

Math Moments that Matter

KINDERGARTEN

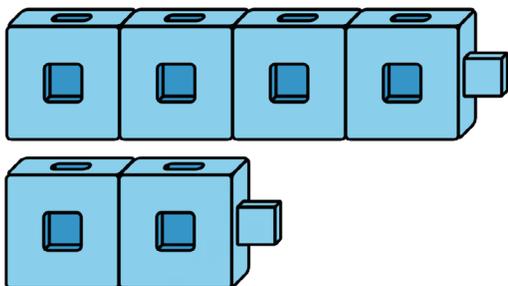


Addition & Subtraction

Kindergarten is all about building strong number sense. One of the key ideas your student explores is understanding addition as “putting together or adding to” and subtraction as “taking apart or taking from.” Students use objects, drawings, and simple equations to see how numbers grow and shrink. These experiences help prepare them for deeper work with operations in later grades.

Students use connecting cubes and simple drawings to show how numbers can be put together and taken apart. In the first image, a student builds a train of cubes and then separates it to see the parts. In the second image, a student crosses out counters to show taking some away. These hands-on moments help students see that numbers grow when we add and shrink when we subtract—and make math feel clear and doable.

EXAMPLE: *Connecting cubes showing 6*



EXAMPLE: *Counters showing 2*



Images adapted from Illustrative Mathematics, © 2021 Illustrative Mathematics®. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

Modeling & Data in Math

When kindergartners model addition and subtraction, they are making sense of numbers in the real world. They learn to:

- Represent stories with objects, drawings, or equations
- Use models like counters, cubes, or drawings to show joining and separating
- Organize and interpret simple data (such as how many of each fruit the class likes)
- Connect math ideas to everyday experiences

These habits help students build confidence with operations and see how math describes the world around them.

What You Might See in the Classroom

Students acting out addition or subtraction stories with counters or drawings.

Teachers asking:

- “Can you show what happened with the cubes?”
- “What number sentence matches your story? ((A number sentence is a math statement using numbers and symbols.)”
- “How do you know?”

Students using ten-frames or number parts to represent problems.

Students creating and answering simple “How many in all?” or “How many are left?” problems.

What You Can Do at Home

Use snack time: “You have 4 crackers; I give you 3 more. How many now?”

Play take-away games: “You had 6 cars. You gave 2 away. How many are left?”

Tell math stories together: “There were 5 birds in the tree. 2 flew away...”

Encourage your student to show the problem with fingers, drawings, or toys.

Play simple board games that involve adding or taking away spaces.

Ask: “How did you figure that out?”

Make it a Math Moment!

Every problem tells a story. When students join or take apart groups and explain their thinking, they build confidence as young problem solvers.

