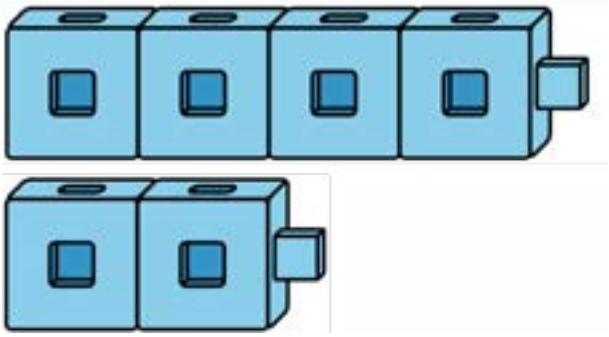
Math Moments that Matter

Kindergarten: Addition and Subtraction

Kindergarten is all about building strong number sense. One of the key ideas your student will be working on is understanding addition as “putting together/adding to” and subtraction as “taking apart/taking from.” Students explore these ideas using models, objects, drawings, and equations. These foundations prepare them for more formal work with operations and data in later grades.

Students explore addition and subtraction by joining and separating sets of objects. Using connecting cubes and counters, they build, take apart, and compare groups to see how numbers work together. Through these hands-on experiences, students discover that numbers can grow when we add and get smaller when we take away, laying the foundation for confident problem-solving in math.

EXAMPLE: *Unifix cubes and counters*



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Modeling and Data in Math

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

- Represent stories and situations with objects, drawings, or equations.
- Use models (such as counters, cubes, or drawings) to show joining and separating.
- Organize, represent, 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 start to 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 cubes or a picture?"
- "What number sentence matches your story?"
- "How do you know?"

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

Students using counters, fingers, cubes, or drawings to show joining or separating groups.

Students creating and answering simple "How many in all?" or "How many are left?" questions.

What You Can Do at Home:

Use household objects: "Let's make 14 with 10 pennies and 4 pennies."

Ask: "How many tens and ones are in 18?"

Play: "Show me 12 with your fingers and then with blocks."

Encourage your student to explain their thinking: "Tell me how you knew that was 15."

Build teen numbers with snacks or toys: make a group of 10, then add some ones. Say: "Ten and ones."

Ten-frame at home: fill an egg carton row (10) and add a few more to say the number.

Trade 10 for a dime: swap 10 pennies for a dime to show a ten.

Talk it out: "How do you know that's 14?" "Can you show it another way?"

Make it a Math Moment!

Math stories are everywhere — snacks, toys, steps, even playtime! Ask your student to show the story with tools or drawings, not just tell the answer.