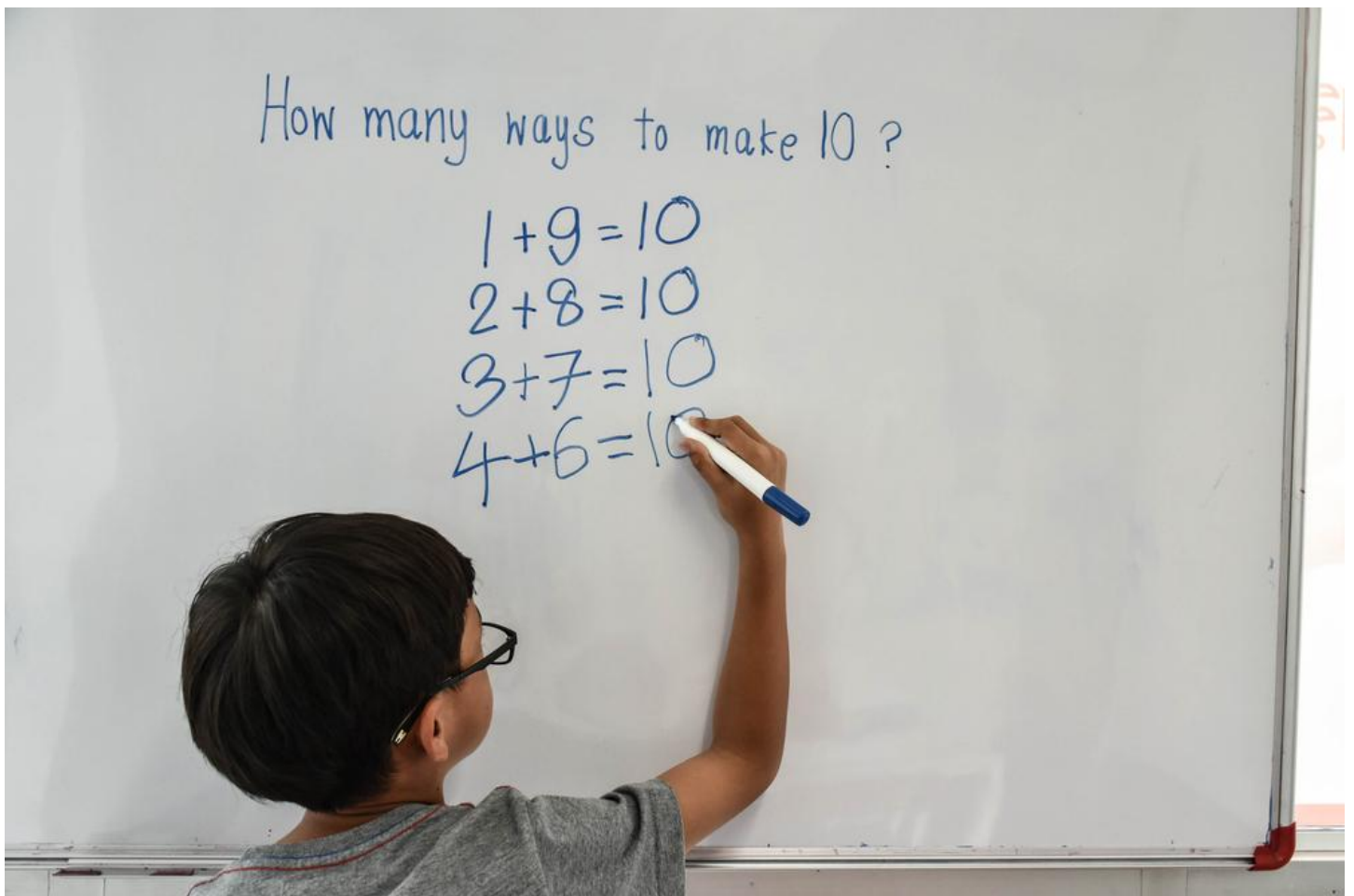


## 8 Strategies to Teach Number Sense to Preschool and Elementary School Kids

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Even as toddlers, the littlest of learners are learning to use their mathematical minds. The word “more” is one of the first words kids learn at the dinner table, and they are quick to learn that they want the most candy or the biggest slice of pie at dessert. Kids are constantly evaluating their world and comparing objects by quantity, size, shape, and more!

Since kids have this natural capacity to make sense of their world through mathematical concepts, it’s important to take those primitive skills to the next level by helping them make connections between their everyday observations and a more solid understanding of numbers. That’s why it’s so important to support your child’s development of number sense. But how can a parent begin teaching number sense to ensure such a concrete understanding of math concepts?



If you're wondering how to teach number sense to your child, try the following strategies to support your little learner's early math skills:

## Noticing Everyday Math

Nothing is more important than engaging with your child and talking about the math you and your child experience daily. Talk about prices, budget, and quantity at the grocery store, and show your child how you use math to manage money. [Practice fractions](#) while cooking and baking, and take note of the shapes found in road signs and outdoors. Talking about the math found in everyday life sets a purpose for using and performing math processes. If kids know why math is so important in real life, they will be excited to find reasons to use it!

## It's All About the Process

Oftentimes, we get caught up with finding an answer to a math problem that we pay little attention to the process we take to solve it. Sometimes we impatiently want to find the answer quickly and move on to the next task. Instead, teach your child that the most important part of solving a problem is the way they solve it. To do this, encourage your child to look check their work and find mistakes they might have made.

# Strategies for Preschool and Kindergarten Kids

## Verbalizing Math Concepts

When a child describes their work and explains the process they took to solve a problem or make an observation, they are more likely to internalize what they've learned. This simply means kids will remember more when they talk about it. When working with your child on a homework assignment, encourage your child to tell you how they plan to solve the problem. During completion, have your child tell you about it each step of the way. In doing so, your child will develop number sense as they internalize and understand the process they took to solve the problem.

## Dot Cards

Subitizing is the skill that refers to instantly and visually recognizing a group of objects and knowing the number just by looking. This is an important mental math skill that aids in solving problems, as well as understanding numbers. Using dot cards can help your child build this critical skill by gaining more practice [recognizing groups of dots](#) on the card.

## Using Manipulatives

Learning numbers for kids can be a tough task. To make numbers make sense on paper, it's helpful to use manipulatives that kids can use to make sense of quantity. A quick

Google search for “math manipulatives” will lead you to online vendors who sell place value blocks, counters, magnet manipulatives, and more. Manipulatives give your child a concrete way to represent numbers. In a pinch, you can even visually show your child simple addition and subtraction using Skittles or M&M’s to demonstrate the concepts for deeper understanding of math.

Check out our collection of [fun math videos](#) to satiate your kid’s thirst for early number sense concepts.



Watch on [YouTube](#)

## Strategies for Elementary School Kids

### Number Lines

There’s more than one way to solve math problems, and kids should learn different strategies to increase their number sense. For instance, using a number line can help kids make the connection between addition and subtraction or [practice place value](#). Kids can even learn subtraction by using addition by flipping the problem around. Teaching kids multiple ways to solve problems strengthens number sense by understanding the processes they take to solve problems.

### Mental Math

When kids [skip count by 2’s, 5’s, or 10’s](#), kids are using mental math to add. We can continue this process by asking kids to add less or more, and teaching strategies like splitting and jumping. These strategies focus on different ways to break down math

problems to make difficult problems easy to solve mentally. Teaching these strategies give your child one more tool to help them understand numbers inside and out.

## Make Estimations and Predictions

Place a favorite candy in a small container, and ask your child to estimate how many candies are in the bowl. Kids can solidify their number sense by making estimations and predictions based on observations. Moreover, your child will make the connection between quantity and numbers, sharpening their number sense.

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Like many adults, for some kids, math can be a source of frustration and anxiety. But solving tricky math problems doesn't need to be so difficult if only a child understands numbers and math processes. That's why strengthening your child's number sense makes a world of difference. When your child has a solid understanding of numbers and how they work, your little learner will have a foundation for future math success!

