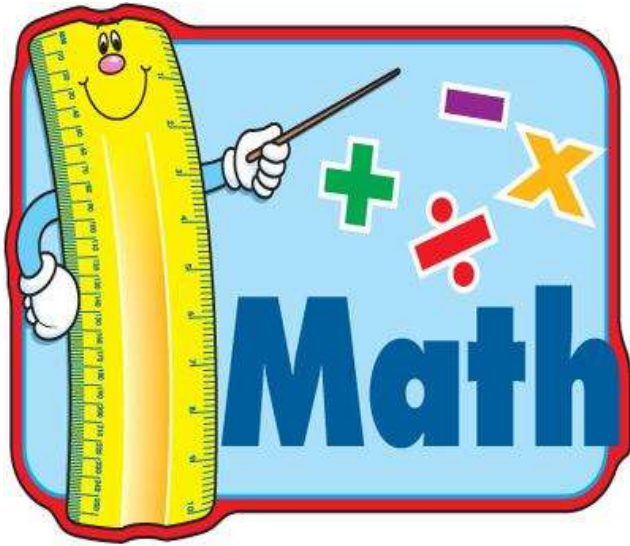


More Math Skills for ages 4-5



“Mr. Zero”

Purpose: To introduce and have the children understand the concept of “The Empty Set or Zero”.

Materials: Several empty containers; an empty purse, an empty can, an empty bag, a trash can with nothing in it, an empty juice bottle, an empty soda bottle, etc. Have a cut out set of numbers available from “0 to 3”.

Procedure: Have the child or children sit in a circle on the floor, around the arrangement of empty containers you placed there. Tell them you want to talk about “Mr. Zero”. Hold up the numeric symbol that represents that digit; “0”.

Evaluation: Pose questions to the child or children that will require the answer “zero”. The sillier the question, the better.

- How many horses do we have in our room?
- How many tractors are parked on that table?
- How many cats are sitting on my desk?
- How many pigs are standing on your head?

Every time they answer “zero,” hold up the “0” cut out that represents zero. Now, show them the empty containers one by one. Explain that “zero” means that the set is empty. Ask them to make up their own questions that could be answered with the word “zero”. Have some cut out numbers or magnetic numbers from “0 to 3” located in an area that the child or children can reach. Providing that they are already familiar with the symbols 1, 2, and 3, (and even if they are not) have them come up and pick out the symbol that represents an empty set; “0”. Mix the numbers up and have them pick out the zero again. Make sure that you praise them for correct answers and encourage them to try again if they miss it.