Math Milestones By Age

0 to 2 Year Olds

- use all of their senses to identify familiar objects and people

- begin to predict and anticipate sequences of events

- notice cause-and-effect relationships

- start to classify objects in a simple but thoughtful manner - for example, toys that roll, toys that don't

- use words to classify objects according to basic characteristics, such as type (toy animals, blocks)

- begin to use relationship words and comparative language, such as bigger and under

2 to 3 Year Olds

- begin to understand the concept and use of numbers - for example, realize that when they count their crackers, each is given one number

- count three or four objects, but then count the same object twice or skip objects

- understand many directional and relationship words, such as "straight" and "behind"

- can fit large puzzle pieces into place, demonstrating an understanding of the relationships between geometric shapes

- notice patterns in the things they see and hear

- make cause-and-effect predictions

3 to 4 Year Olds

- recognize and look for geometric shapes in the environment

- enjoy sorting and classifying objects, usually only one characteristic at a time - color, shape, or size

- begin to classify things by their uses

- notice and compare similarities and differences

- use words to describe size and quantity relationships - "My bowl is the biggest!"

4 to 5 Year Olds

- enjoy playing games involving numbers

- struggle with classifications that are not obvious

- count objects or people up to 10 or 20 with less skip-counting or double counting

- understand that symbols represent complex patterns

- solve multiple-piece puzzles by recognizing and matching geometric shapes

- use concepts such as height, size, and length to compare objects

5 to 6 Year Olds

- start to add small numbers in their heads, but still are more comfortable adding real objects that they can actually touch and move

- classify objects according to more than one characteristic- sorting the blue round blocks and the red square ones

- use their longer attention spans to focus on activities that interest them

- use positional words to explain spatial relationships - for example, "on top of the table," "behind the chair"