Putting the Pieces of the Puzzle Together

GAMES

Reinforcing Basic Skills Through Games

IMI bas '04
Why Games?

• Allow children to discover ideas and develop an understanding of mathematics at their own pace.
• Provide opportunities for playful practice of mathematics skills.
• Serve as an alternative to tedious skill/drill activities.
• Put children in a position to learn from and teach each other as they play.
As Children Play Games

• They reinforce concepts and build speed and confidence,
• Work cooperatively in groups which helps build social skills.
• Can work at their own skill level. (The teacher can vary the numbers or concepts within a game to make it easier or harder.)
• Enjoy themselves!
Competition

- Ideally, children will play to see what happens, not to see who wins.

- Keep the focus on what is occurring during the game.
  
  Was it fun? Easy? Difficult?
  Long? Short?
  Could you play it a different way?
Game/Activity Stations

• Game stations are set up with all materials and directions. Teachers will have the opportunity to go to 3 to 5 stations.

• Groups of four to five will work together to read the directions, note the grade level and game “focus” or objective, then play the game.

• Think about how the game would benefit all levels of your students and jot your ideas on the form.
To ensure skills development, provide opportunities for students to play games frequently. Games can be organized and implemented in your classroom in many ways. Here are some ideas!

- Establish guidelines for game play (manners) as well as when students may play games (when finished with assignments, free choice time, or as part of an assignment).
- Practice playing the games over several days and supervise students as they play practice games before using games independently.
- Keep games in a specific area - a games corner or shelf - where games are readily available.
- Create a “Games List” on chart paper and post games as they are taught. Refer to it frequently.
- Add game adaptations, using a different colored marker, to the “Games List” poster.
- Establish a routine that allows students to play games frequently.
- Establish game stations through which students can rotate. Station time can be during an entire math lesson (Game Day), when a substitute teacher is in the classroom, or used throughout the week.
- Invite parents or older students to come into the classroom and play games at designated times.
- Manage the materials - Don’t let the materials manage you! A few tips are:
  1. Color code or mark with shapes card decks.
  2. Put games together ahead of time and play them before you teach them.
  3. Mark each set of dominoes by spray painting the backs.
  4. Store card decks in travel soap holders or snack baggies.
  5. Laminate game boards on file folders or on cardstock to create a class set and reuse them.
  6. Organize games in file folders or manila envelopes.
  7. Create a “lost and found” box for missing game pieces or manipulative.
  8. Store frequently used student materials in “tool kits” or “math kits”. (Baggies or plastic containers.)
  10. Clearly label any games you prepare with the game name and page number.