

**H**ere you will find 36 weeks of simple and fun math activities to do with your preschooler. These activities will complement any early math instruction, although they particularly fit hand-in-glove with **Mathematical Reasoning Beginning 1**.

Every week starts with an opening story problem that will introduce or strengthen the targeted math concept. Occasionally, to reinforce and personalize that week's goal, the story will be restated, this time with spots left blank for names. We encourage you to select immediate and extended family members, friends, or

favorite characters from books or DVDs.

Of course, to add even more variety, made-up people will work as well, but the concrete imagining of a beloved friend may just help math matter to your preschooler.

These "word problems," with their unique names, can be used over and over. As this technique becomes more familiar to you, those prompts fade, though we have sprinkled a variety of **parent tips** throughout.

As you read through the stories with your child, have him place the animals where the story says they should go. Unlike bored older students, preschoolers thrive

on repetition. Depending on what works well for you and your child, you may want to repeat the activity with different names several times in a row on a single day, or play out the story once each day through the week. Either way, each week you will be reinforcing one or more simple math concepts using the farm animals and the fold-out mat.

### Introductory Exercises

Before you dive into Farmland Math, be sure to lay the necessary groundwork of color and shape recognition. Thankfully, those two skills are easy to teach and an enjoyable task for your child to complete. Simply ask him to sort by color and shape, or, in this case, color and animals. Even if he doesn't know the names of the animals or colors, he can succeed by just matching like to like. If this is unfamiliar territory for your preschooler, we encourage you to dwell here for a while until he can, if asked, confidently place all the green animals in one field and all the red in another, or all the chickens in the barn, and all the cows in the orchard. Top off these skills with some rudimentary questions that pertain to size. Are you taller than a horse? Is a chicken as big as a cow? What animal would fit into a suitcase? What animal could hide in your toy box? Once these concepts are familiar to your preschooler, he is ready for Farmland Math.

## Goal: Practice counting from one to three.

Byron had apple trees growing next to his pasture, and on them were the most delicious red apples. First Bonnie the cow came and started to eat the apples on the lower branches. How many animals are eating apples?

Next, roly-poly Taffy the pig came and started to eat the apples on the ground. Now how many animals are eating apples?

Last, tall Angie the horse came to eat apples. Now how many animals are eating apples?

Do you think they will eat all of the apples, or will they leave some for Byron?

**Personalize it:** (Name) had apple trees growing next to his pasture, and on them were the most delicious red apples. First (name) the (animal) came and started to eat the apples on the lower branches. How many animals are eating apples?

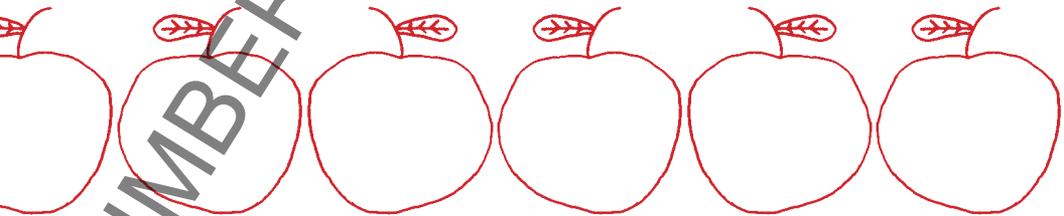
Next, (name) the (animal) came and started to eat the apples on the ground. Now how many animals are eating apples?

Last, (name) the (animal) came to eat apples. Now how many animals are eating apples?

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If your preschooler is new to this, pick up and set down, or touch each animal as you count and ask him to mimic you.

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## Goal: Count and compare.

The Watts family has just bought a new farm! They need help finding places for all of their livestock on their new farm. Put on their green sheep, orange sheep, purple sheep, and yellow sheep. Next put on their green cow and purple cow. Last, put on their green pony.

How many green animals did the Watts family bring to their farm?

How many purple animals?

Are there more purple or green animals?

How many sheep does the Watts family own?

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Vary the colors and amounts of animals using numbers from one to four.

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