



Mental Math and Estimation

Why is mental math and estimation important in numeracy?

- Estimating helps us to find solutions for problems in everyday life.
- We estimate amounts, time, space, shape, direction and location. We also estimate relationships between objects.

How can I help my child?

Together with your child, try these activities:

- Play guessing games, such as: Which takes more time? How many of these will fit into that? Which do you think is heavier, lighter, longer, shorter, etc.? Explain your thinking.
- Collect leaves, stones and pinecones. Before counting, estimate how many you have. Estimate how many stones would cover a leaf.
- Go to the grocery store. Choose a few items and estimate how much it would cost to buy all of them.
- Estimate how fast you can run, hop or wheel to a spot and back and then time it.
- Place small items, like buttons or beads, in a jar or cup and estimate how many there are.
- Find containers of different shapes and estimate which one holds more buttons or beads.
- Imagine how you could arrange chairs around a table. Will they all fit?
- Estimate how tall a person is and then measure their actual height.
- Estimate how many scoops or shovelfuls of sand or dirt could fill a bucket. Try it out.
- Talk to your child's teacher about how mental math and estimations skills are developed and practiced in the classroom.

Find out more:

- Watch these videos to find out more:
 - [Alberta Education: Numeracy Video](#)
 - [Alberta Education: My Child's Math A Guide for Parents](#)
- Read about helping to develop mental math and estimation skills: [The 7 Mathematical Processes: Mental Math and Estimation](#)

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