

Beyond the Assessment: Incorporating Mathematical Moments into K-2 Classroom Routines/Transitions

Here are some ideas for building the skills that are measured in each of the specific expectations of the 2026 Kindergarten Curriculum's Mathematical Foundations category. These activities complement Tier 1 instruction by transforming routine, transitional moments throughout the school day into quick, powerful learning opportunities. By embedding mathematical moments into daily routines, educators can seamlessly reinforce the curriculum's foundational skill development. These activities can also be easily modified for Tier 2 small-group interventions to support targeted skill deficits. Where appropriate, these examples incorporate movement and kinesthetic practice, leveraging multi-sensory learning to help solidify essential early reading skills into long-term memory.

Number Sense and Operations	
Ideas to Support	Explanation/Examples
Password	• Say, "I have 4 crackers and 2 friends. If they share equally, how many does each friend get? That is my password!" • Use a variety of contexts and quantities.
Mystery Bag (Estimating)	• Prepare a bag with several blocks. • Say, "I have a mystery number of blocks in my bag. It is one more than four"
Simon Says (Subitizing and Operations)	• Say, "Simon says, show me four fingers using two hands." Or hold up a subitizing card (dots) and say, "Simon says, tell me how many dots you see without counting."
Math Train	• Have the students stand in a line. • The educator starts with a number, shape or pattern. • Each student adds a related idea. Example: "4", "one more is 5", "5 fingers"
Find a Friend	• Each student receives a card showing a quantity, shape, pattern, numeral or representation. • Students move around the room to find classmates with matching or equivalent mathematical ideas
Password	• As students are entering a space or joining an activity, ask them to solve a quick math challenge. • Example: "show me 5 using your fingers."
Math Symbol Sprint	• Quickly flash numerals, shapes, or mathematical symbols. • Have students identify them and describe something they know about them. • Example: "This is a triangle. It has 3 sides."
Sensory Number & Shape Tracing	• Students trace numerals, shapes, or patterns in sand, shaving cream, or on textured surfaces while saying what they notice about them.

Math Scavenger Hunt	• The educator calls out a mathematical concept such as “Find something shaped like a rectangle.” or “Find a group of 3” • Students locate and explain their findings
Alien Number Code	• Friendly aliens communicate using number codes, patterns or shape sequences. • Students decode the message and explain how they solved it.
True or Not? Math Sort	• The educator makes mathematical statements. Students move to a “true” or “not true” area and explain their reasoning.
Math Boxes	• Students use counters and boxes to show different ways to make a number. • Example: Show 5 as 2 and 3, 4 and 1, or 5 and 0
Count and Move	• The educator gives a movement challenge such as “Take 5 giant steps” or “Do 3 jumps and 2 claps.”
Counting Fingers Challenge	• The educator says a number. Students represent it on their fingers in as many different ways as possible and explain their strategies.
Musical Math Moves	• Place numerals, shapes, or pattern cards around the room. Students move while music plays. When it stops, they stand on a card and share something they know about it.
The Math Thinking Cheer	• The educator calls, “How can we make 6?” while holding up linking cube trains in various combinations. Students respond with different combinations. Keep a rhythmic pace.
Choral Counting & Math Talk	• The educator leads the class in counting together forward, backward, by 2s or other pattern sequences
Partner Math Talk	• The educator displays an image of a math concept. • Partners discuss prompts such as “How do you know there are 5?” or “Which shape would work?” Students practice listening and responding to each other’s ideas.
Roll and Solve	• The educator identifies a math challenge such as counting on, how many more to make 10, or comparing quantities • Students roll a die and complete a challenge using the number that was rolled.

Patterns and Relationships	
Ideas to support	Explanation/Examples
Robot Counting & Pattern Tapping	Students move like robots while tapping, clapping, or stepping through counting sequences and patterns.
Hop & Say (Coding, Patterning)	Give the students a “code” (sequence). For example, “two hops forward, one jump up!” or a pattern: “clap, stomp, clap, stomp.”
Musical Math Moves	Place numerals, shapes, or pattern cards around the room. Students move while music plays. When it stops, they stand on a card and share something they know about it.
Build a Number/Pattern	Using cubes, tiles, loose parts or blocks, students build a given number or pattern and explain their construction

Data Literacy and Probability	
Ideas to support	Explanation/Examples
The Human Venn Diagram	- Using overlapping circles (hula hoops) on the floor near the transition area, give a sorting rule. - Example: “If you are wearing Velcro shoes, stand in circle A. If you are wearing white shoes, stand in circle B. If you are wearing white shoes with velcro, stand in the middle. If neither, line up at the door.
The Sticky-Note Bar Graph	- Draw a simple T-chart grid on a whiteboard near the door. - As students walk past to line up or go to their cubbies they stick a post it note in the column that represents them. - Example: apple/banana, walk to school/ride in a vehicle - Once everyone is in line, ask, “Which column has the most?” and “Which column has the least?”
Will It Happen?	- While students are settled on the carpet, waiting, play a probability movement game, calling out scenarios - Example: Is it certain (stand up) possible (criss-cross) or impossible (cover your eyes) that a real dinosaur will walk through our classroom door right now?
Is It Fair?	- The educator holds up a standard 6-sided die. Say, “If I roll a 1,2, or 3, Table 1 lines up. If I roll a 4, 5, or 6, Table two lines up. Is this game fair? Does everyone have the same chance? - Next day twist: “If I roll a 1, table one lines up. If I roll a 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6, table 2 lines up. Is this fair?

Geometric and Spatial Reasoning	
Ideas to support	Explanation/Examples
True or Not? Shape Chat	The educator makes mathematical statements. Students move to a “true” or “not true” area and explain their reasoning.
Math Scavenger Hunt	- The educator calls out a mathematical concept such as “Find something shaped like a rectangle.” or “Find a group of 3” - Students locate and explain their findings
"I Spy" (Geometry)	educator leads a game of “I Spy” with prompts about items in view that align with geometric properties such as: - number of sides - longer/shorter than - triangle, rectangle, circle, hexagon, or trapezoid - made up of multiple shapes
Sensory Number & Shape Tracing	Students trace numerals, shapes, or patterns in sand, shaving cream, or on textured surfaces while saying what they notice about them.
Mystery Math Object	- The educator hides an object and provides mathematical clues about its shape, size, attributes, or quantity. - The students might ask questions and make predictions

Measurement	
Ideas to support	Explanation/Examples
The Shrinking/Growing Line Up	- As students get ready to line up, give an instruction based on height or length. - Example: “If you are shorter than this book, line up.” “Find a partner. The taller partner can walk to the carpet first.”
Stretch and Shrink	While waiting for everyone to gather, the educator calls out prompts such as: “Make your body as narrow as a pencil. Now make it as wide as a door. Show me a long arm stretch. Show me a short finger tap.”
Heavier or Lighter	During tidy-up transition, challenge the class: “Today we are cleaning up by weight. Until you hear my signal, only pick up things that are light.
Who Holds More?	The educator holds up two containers filled with water. Ask students, “Which one holds more?”

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have students vote• Test by pouring each container into a measuring cylinder |
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