



AFTERSCHOOL *news*



Math Centers

Afterschool is all about doing things differently, and mathematics enrichment is no exception. Instead of teaching another math lesson, you may want to consider the fun and flexibility of math centers.

Math centers are small-group stations that let students work together on fun activities like puzzles, problems that use manipulatives (physical objects that help students visualize relationships and applications), and brainteasers. For example, students can improve their ability to make and test predictions by outlining their hands and feet on graph paper and predicting whether their hand or foot has the greatest length and width. At another center, they can practice adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing decimals as they try to determine how to use \$65 to feed four people when ordering food from a restaurant menu.

Day-school teachers can help you get started creating the centers by sharing what math concepts students are studying. You should also consider what activities students enjoy and find ways to incorporate math concepts and skills into them. Students with an interest in art might enjoy using pentominoes (sets of small squares) to form different shapes. Once you have outlined the math centers, set aside space and secure supplies. Students will most likely show greater interest if they see the centers as a fun challenge rather than another assignment. As students work at the different centers, you can circulate among the groups, offering guidance and feedback.

Research suggests that math centers can encourage students to learn with less instructor guidance and increase their enthusiasm for learning by allowing them to make choices, work together, and talk about math. Through fun activities, math centers help bring academic content to life and encourage students to make real-world connections to math. You can learn more about math centers and the activities listed here in the math section of the Afterschool Training Toolkit (www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/math), a free online training resource developed by the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning. The math section of the toolkit was developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (www.mcrel.org).



Photo courtesy of Gateway to Success

Through fun activities, math centers help bring academic content to life and encourage students to make real-world connections to math.

The National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning helps state education agencies and local practitioners develop high-quality programs for academic enrichment as well as youth development activities.

www.sedl.org/afterschool



FEATURED *resource*

WANT MORE MATH ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM?

The Afterschool Lesson Plan Database has activities for six content areas, including math. Lessons are browsable by content area and grade level.

You can also submit a lesson to be included in the database.

www.sedl.org/afterschool/lessonplans/index.cgi?location=menu&show_subject=Math



Photo courtesy Gateway to Success

"We keep students interested in learning math through a wide variety of activities that support student achievement."

KATRINA CAVANESS
program director

Gateway to Success

DREW COUNTY, ARKANSAS

At the Gateway to Success 21st CCLC afterschool program in Drew County, Arkansas, staff and students are proud that their students' academic gains in math and literacy have exceeded those of students who do not attend afterschool programs. The program uses several research-based strategies, including utilizing games, manipulatives, and technology to engage students; working closely with day-school teachers; aligning activities with state standards; and offering tutoring for students who need additional help. Instructors who offer math enrichment are typically certified classroom math teachers and math coaches (certified teachers who have additional training for math instruction and remediation).

Other program features have less to do with math but are still important to student success. Students receive a healthy snack to provide the "brain power" that gives them the energy to focus on activities. Younger students also join recreational activities to burn off energy before turning to academics. Finally, students of all ages are able to choose from a variety of engaging, educational activities. "We keep students interested in learning math through a wide variety of activities that support student achievement and, whenever possible, allow the student[s] to choose their schedule," says program director Katrina Cavaness.

IN YOUR *words*

What types of activities do you use for math enrichment in your afterschool program? (Select all that apply.)

- Math centers
- Games and puzzles
- Computer activities
- Tutoring
- Other

To participate in this survey and view results, submit your vote at www.sedl.org/afterschool/afterwords/survey200805.html.

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Editor: Laura Shankland
Designer: Shaila Abdullah

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Webinar: "Hands-on Learning: Using Math Tools in Afterschool"

This webinar will introduce afterschool professionals to the math section of the Afterschool Training Toolkit and show them how to use different types of math manipulatives for hands-on learning. To register, please visit <https://www.livemeeting.com/lrs/1100001174/Registration.aspx?pageName=qs3s6brr6ssxr10x>.

EVENTS *calendar*

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|------------|---|
| June 11 | Webinar: "Hands-on Learning: Using Math Tools in Afterschool"
1 P.M. CDT |
| July 15-17 | 21st Century Community Learning Center
Summer Institute
DALLAS, TX |

For more events, visit our calendar at www.sedl.org/afterschool/training/calendar.html.

Newsletter available online at www.sedl.org/afterschool/afterwords