

FRACTION ACTIVITIES

Activities for Learning

RightStartMath.com 888-272-3291

Introduce children to fractions early, in kindergarten or first grade, if possible. They are part of everyday life. When children do not learn fractions until the fourth or fifth grades, they are so convinced that 5 is always more than 4 that they have a problem with $1/5$ being less than $1/4$. When working with fractions, children should only use the horizontal form, not the slanted line. (The slanted line is used here for technical reasons.) Although “pies” are often used to represent fractions, circles make it difficult to show fractions greater than one. Also with circles the unit of comparison is unclear: are we comparing areas, angles, or arcs?

To be successful with more advanced fractions, children must be thoroughly familiar with multiplication and division of whole numbers. This background is needed to simplify a fraction to lowest terms and to find a lowest common denominator.

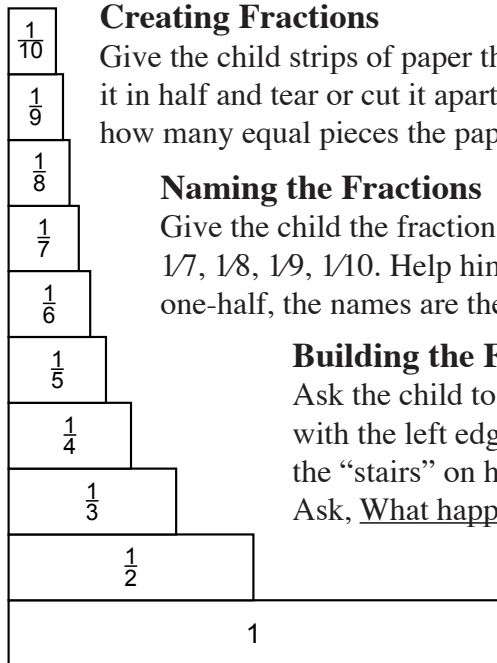
Some might feel that fractions are becoming obsolete. The metric system does not need them and calculators use decimals. However, fractions are the culmination of arithmetic and are essential for understanding algebra and other advanced topics. In essence, fractions are division.

Investigating the Fraction Chart

The linear fraction model provides a child with a better representation of fractions than circles. Show the child the fraction chart and board pieces. Ask her to build the fraction chart, but not on top of the completed fraction chart. It is easier to do if the various pieces are first sorted into piles. Ask her if she sees any patterns.

Creating Fractions

Give the child strips of paper the same length as the 1 on the fraction chart. Demonstrate and then have her fold it in half and tear or cut it apart at the fold. Write the fraction $1/2$ and explain that it is 1 divided by 2. The 2 tells how many equal pieces the paper was divided into. Take another strip and repeat for $1/3$ and $1/4$.



Naming the Fractions

Give the child the fraction pieces and ask him to find one of each of the following: 1 , $1/2$, $1/3$, $1/4$, $1/5$, $1/6$, $1/7$, $1/8$, $1/9$, $1/10$. Help him pronounce the names correctly by repeating after you. With the exception of one-half, the names are the same as the ordinal numbers: third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and so on.

Building the Fraction Stairs

Ask the child to find the 1 and set it aside. Then ask her to find the $1/2$ and place it above the 1 with the left edges even, as shown, on the left. Continue with the $1/3$ and $1/4$. Let her complete the “stairs” on her own. When the stairs are complete, ask her if she could climb such a stairs. Ask, What happens near the top?

More activities on the full instructions include:

- Completing the Fraction Chart
- Breaking One into Parts
- Adding Fractions
- Fractions of a Dollar

This Fraction product is one of many wonderful and exciting fraction manipulatives available from Activities for Learning: Fraction Puzzle board, Fraction Magnet, vinyl Fraction Charts and Fraction Games. Check out these and other products including: the *Math Card Games*, AL Abacus, and Math Balance.

Activities for Learning is the proud provider of elementary level *RightStart™ Mathematics* and intermediate *RightStart™ Mathematics: A Hands-On Geometric Approach*.

For more information visit the web at RightStartMath.com or call toll-free at 888-272-3291.