Fruit Math

Age: Preschool-age (3-4 years)

This activity helps your child's development in this domain: Cognitive

What You Need:

• A whole fruit such as a banana, a papaya, an apple, or an orange
• Cutting board
• Knife (for adult use only)

What To Do:

1. Ask your child to help you get a fruit from the refrigerator or fruit bowl.
2. Let her watch while you cut the fruit in half.
3. Ask her, “How many pieces of banana do we have now?” Showing her each half, say, “One half of the banana plus the other half of the banana equals one whole banana.”
4. Explain that both pieces must be equal or the same size in order to be two halves and when they are put back together, they make a whole, or one piece of fruit.
5. Depending on your child’s interest and understanding, you may want to try showing examples of thirds (three equal parts), fourths (four equal parts), or eighths (eight equal parts).

VARIATIONS:

1. Peel an orange and let your child help you break apart the sections. Have her count the number of sections. Help her put several sections together to make a half an orange or divide them into several groups.
2. Use other foods such as a roll of sushi or a special-occasion food like gau to show the same concepts. Cut it in half. Then cut each half again to make fourths. Then cut the fourths to make eighths. Dampen the knife with water before cutting each slice so the food won’t stick to the knife. Share the pieces with family members. Count how many you started out with, how many were eaten, and how many are left.

Look for other things around the house that can be divided in half or in equal parts. Find things that relate to sharing with a sibling such as half of a room, bed, or sandwich. Or use pizza or pie slices to talk about pieces that make up a whole item.