

Top Ten Outdoor Math Games

No matter what age a child is, mathematical understanding should be developed through stories, songs, games and imaginative play. Taking math outdoors provides a whole new way to look at math.

Taking math outdoors:

Draws out the mathematical learning in other activities, including observing numbers and patterns in the environment and in daily routines.

Provides real-life problems with real objects/surroundings.

Models mathematical vocabulary.

Gives children sufficient time, space and encouragement to use 'new' words and mathematical ideas.

With that said here are the **Top 10** most Engaging and Easy:

Outdoor Math Games (for K-5 grade)

*** these games can be adapted for all grades K-5 as suggested***

Number 1: New Hopscotch:

A great one for numeral recognition and fact practice-kids love it. I find it works really well for skip counting too...we label the squares 2, 4, 6, 8 etc. (you could use any multiple). A nice, fun and easy way to reinforce how to skip count. Try labeling the squares skip counting by different numbers. Then, when your child is ready erase the numbers and skip count without the written numbers.

You can find skip counting songs on [crazymathmom.com](http://www.crazymathmom.com):

<http://www.math-games-and-activities-at-home.com/4thgrademath-multiplicationfacts.html>



Number 2: What's the Time Mr Wolf?

No doubt you've all played this one... here's how we play it...

One child (Mr Wolf) stands at the end of the courtyard/grass area (wherever you're playing it!) with their back to the other child or parent (whatever the case may be). The other children or parent calls out: 'What's the time Mr Wolf?', and Mr Wolf answers with a time (the older they are more complex the times become- ie: 5:15 OR 4:45) then the children or parents take that number of steps (I always get them to count aloud to practice sequencing). This continues until someone reaches Mr Wolf and tags

him, OR until Mr Wolf calls out 'Dinnertime!', when he turns around and tries to tag everyone before they run back to the starting point. To make it more difficult Mr. Wolf can say, "one more than.... o'clock' or 'one hour before ... o'clock'" Another way to play it is to get the kids to skip count their steps out loud until they get to the time the Wolf called out- (ie. 7 o'clock would be...2, 4, 6, 7).

Number 3: All around Sports:

Basketball, soccer, what ever your sport- you can have fun with math. Have your child try predicting how many baskets or goals they can make out of 10. Then ask your child to convert the number of shots that they made into a percentage. If they took 10 shots, they would add a zero to the number of shots that they made, as well as a percent sign to indicate the percentage of shots made

Try skip counting while making shots/goals. Basketball is a 2-pt no brainer!

Number 4: Doubles Addition/Multiplication Facts Grid:

The aim of this outdoor game is to encourage 'automacy' in the recall of basic facts.

What to do: 1. Draw the game grid on concrete using chalk. Each square should be about 30cm by 30cm. (the example shows addition doubles or multiplication by 2's but, you can make up your own based on what your child needs to work on).

2. Two players (can be played with one person, too) stand with their feet in the large feet facing the addition game board.

3. A 'Caller' asks a question from one of the cards 9 (you can use flashcards or verbally shout problems).

4. When a player has worked out the answer they must jump from their spot onto the correct answer. Do not move until you know the answer.

Players then rotate positions but the winner stays to compete with next player.

Doubles Jump

0	20	14	6
8	2	16	9
10	18	12	4



Number 5: **Math Racers**

Place a pile of small balls, pebbles, or pine cones at the end of your garden or outside in park. Line up children about 30 feet away and give each of them a bag with a handle. Shout out math problems; the difficulty will depend on their age and ability. They then race to collect a number of balls in their bag that represent the solution to the math problem, emptying them when they return. You should check that the children bring back the correct number of balls each time and, after the game, run through the right answers. Try division problems for older kids: $20 \text{ divided by } 4 = ?$

Number 6: **Flashcard Toss**

This is a simple game that can entertain and educate a lone child or can be a timed competitive game between two or more children. Use a variety of math flashcards (difficulty depends of child) and throw them over a fence, for example, or if there are some steps nearby, from the top of the steps. The point is, do something to make the cards harder for the kids to fetch. The children take turns to race and pick up the card, solve the puzzle and run back as fast as they can. Time them with a stopwatch.

Number 7: **Body Clock**

Use sidewalk chalk to draw a big clock on the ground with a dot in the middle. You can use numbers on the clock – if your child needs it. Then shout out a time and have your child use their body to make that time (see photo). Their legs (the longer part) can be the minute hand and the trunk of their body the hour. For older kids, have them make a quarter past 2, an hour past noon, a quarter to 10, 2 hours past 4:00, you get the idea.

* elapsed time is a very difficult concept for older kids- this will help!



Number 8: **Nature Scavenger Hunt:** Check out these Nature Scavenger hunts at [crazymathmom.com](http://www.math-games-and-activities-at-home.com/naturescavengerhunt.html).

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Number 9: **Invisible Man**

Draw a man (stick figure with a hat, cane, or whatever you want to add) in the sand, dirt, etc. Ask your child a

math question- if they get it right they can erase 1 body part (an arm, a leg, etc.). The goal is to make the man invisible. When we play...I add something to the man if they get the question wrong.

* this is great for spelling practice too*

Number 10: **Special Sticks:**

Spend time searching for a great walking stick- this can be a special walking stick to use all summer. This walking stick will be used for not only walking but measuring. Use masking and mark the stick in 10 inch intervals. Measure away-.....how tall do you think that tree is? Measure it. How close did you get? Older kids can figure out how many inches 2, 8, 10 trees would be.

