

FAMILY MATH

Represent Subtraction

Dear Family,

Students solve subtraction problems and use number sentences to represent their thinking. Actions such as leaving, giving, or eating clearly signal subtraction: “I had 5 watermelon slices. I ate 2 of them. Now there are 3 watermelon slices.” Students use the familiar story structure of beginning, middle, and end to write and understand number sentences.

Words We Are Learning

Subtraction

Minus

Students transition from reading number sentences as “9 **take away** 5 **is** 4” to “9 **minus** 5 **equals** 4.”

$$\boxed{9} \text{ take away } \boxed{5} \text{ is } \boxed{4}.$$
$$\boxed{9} \quad \boxed{-} \quad \boxed{5} \quad \boxed{=} \quad \boxed{4}$$

At-Home Activities

Activity Idea 1 Missing Pennies

Gather 10 pennies and a small container. Place the pennies on a table or workspace. Ask your child to hide some of the pennies in the container while you look away. When they’re ready, work together to write a number sentence to match what happened. Consider asking the following questions:

- How many pennies did we start with?
- What happened next? How could we write that?
- How many pennies are left?

Play again with different number combinations and take turns hiding the pennies.

Activity Idea 2 Bowling at Home

Set up a bowling game at home. Invite your child to set up 10 household items as pins. The items could be toys, spice containers, markers, or plastic bottles. Ask your child to count the items to make sure there are 10. Invite them to roll a ball to knock down the items.

Ask, “How many pins fell?” and “How many are still standing?” Your child can write a subtraction sentence to match what happened. For example, “We started with 10 bottles. I knocked down 3. There are 7 left. I can write that as $10 - 3 = 7$.”

Subtraction Number Sentences

In addition problems, each part plays the same role. They are combined to make the total. As students move to subtraction, they realize that each part plays a different role. One is the part that is removed and the other is the part that remains. Phrases such as *take away* and *are left* are useful to help distinguish between the parts.



5 take away 3 is .

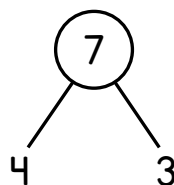
$$5 - 3 = \boxed{}$$

Students can also identify the parts and total in a subtraction problem by sorting. They begin with the total and sort to take one part away.

There are 7 crayons at the writing center. Someone takes 4 blue crayons.
How many crayons are left?



$$7 - 4 = 3$$



Special attention is placed on identifying the part that went away and the part that is left in the number sentence. Students see that number bonds do not show this information, but number sentences do.