

Challenging Learning At Home Week 6- Language

Our weekly challenges will have a concept that will guide the overall theme for the week. Not every activity will relate directly to the theme, but we hope that you will continue to question, reason with, and push your child's thinking about the theme throughout the week.

The weekly challenges will include dinner table conversation ideas designed to deeply explore the concept of the week as well as educational and fun activities that you can do with your child. The activities will include skills from a variety of content areas, but you will notice that we do not specify the content area. We aim to integrate content and skills as much as possible to mirror real world learning.

Activities noted with ** are described in the [Strategy Reference Guide](#).

Big question- What is Language?



Dinner table conversations**

Concept: Language

Main Question: What is language?

Follow Up Questions:

- What is the difference between language and communication?
- Does language always have to be spoken?
- When did language begin?
- How do we learn language?
- Is all language learned?
- Are there languages that do not have words?
- Are babies born with language?
- Do animals have a language?
- Is language mankind's greatest invention?
- Is there such a thing as natural language?
- What is the difference between artificial and human language?

Concept: Language

Main Question: What is the connection between language and thinking?

Follow Up Questions:

- Does language always communicate our thoughts?
- How could language get in the way of your thoughts?
- Can we understand other people's thoughts through their use of language?
- Does our language influence how we think or does how we think influence our language?
- Do we think using personal images or do we think using a shared language?
- Do you dream in a language?
- How might you express feelings if you had no language?
- Do we think in words or pictures?

Concept: Language

Main Question: How important is language?

Follow Up Questions:

- Can we communicate without a language?
- What would happen if we had no language at all?
- Why do we need language?
- How important is it that we share the names and labels for things?
- How important is it that we understand each other?
- What role does language play in the relationships we develop with others?
- What is the relationship between language and power?
- How important is it that public speakers use clear language?
- Why is language important to culture?
- Can a community or society exist without language?

Concept: Language

Main Question: Is language the key to successful learning?

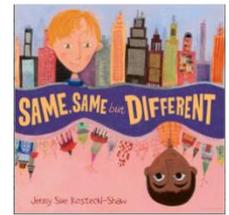
Follow Up Questions:

- Can language be misleading?
- How important are words in helping us to understand the nature of things?
- Does language allow us to gain knowledge?
- How much does language influence people?
- Are the images in your head for things the same as everyone else's?
- Can you learn without language?
- If someone argues that the grass is blue does that make it true?
- Does language encourage independent thought and opinion or discourage it?
- What is the difference between our meaning of language and our use of it?
- What is the role of language in the sharing of common ideas?

Picture Book Activity

Same, Same but Different by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw is a book about two boys who are pen pals and live in different parts of the world. They discover that even though they live in very different places, they have a lot of things in common.

[Click here for a YouTube version.](#)



Use questions like the following to discuss the story:

- Would the boys speak the same language?
- How did the boys communicate?
- What do they mean by same, but different?
- How are you the same as the boys in the book?
- Can you think of some ways that you might be the same as kids from another country, but different?

Have your child make a collage or book that they could use to communicate with a pen pal who speaks a different language. Talk about:

- What should you include?
- What would you like to know about your pen pal?
- What is unique about you? What could you share that is special about where you live?

Body Language

Talk about how we communicate with body language. We use body language to communicate how we feel. Sometimes it is conscious, but often we do not think about the messages we send with our body language.

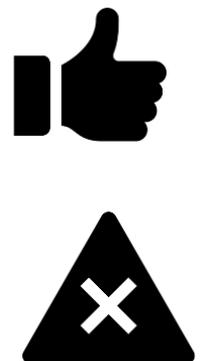
Demonstrate body language, like slouching in your seat, turning your body away, or putting your head on the table and have your child guess how you are feeling. Next, have your child use body language to express feelings so that you can guess.

When you read a story, have your child act out with his or her body language how the characters are feeling or reacting.

Signs and Symbols

Talk about some of the things you have to say a lot during the day. For example- “Wash your hands.” Or “Pick up your toys.” Decide on a hand symbol that you can use instead. Or design a sign that you can just point to. Try to only use that symbol or sign for the whole week.

Add more signs and symbols as you notice phrases or questions that are repeated.



Nonsense Poems

Nonsense poetry is often our first introduction to poetry, read to us in the form of nursery rhymes when we are young. Nonsense poetry has been passed down through many generations and is as old as language itself.

Nonsense poems are poems that intentionally don't make a lot of sense. Some use made-up words, while others contradict themselves or use language in random or unusual ways. At their heart, nonsense rhymes are playful and intended to be humorous and puzzling. Some poems use made up words to describe things, or just to make a nice sound. Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear and Spike Milligan are good authors to read if you like nonsense poetry.

On the Ning Nang Nong by Spike Milligan

On the Ning Nang Nong
Where the Cows go Bong!
and the monkeys all say BOO!
There's a Nong Nang Ning
Where the trees go Ping!
And the tea pots jibber jabber joo.
On the Nong Ning Nang
All the mice go Clang
And you just can't catch 'em when they do!
So its Ning Nang Nong
Cows go Bong!
Nong Nang Ning
Trees go ping
Nong Ning Nang
The mice go Clang
What a noisy place to belong

In this Nonsense poem, there are lots of examples of onomatopoeia (words that make the sound of thing they are describing). Examples of these words can be found in almost every line, such as "and the monkey's all say BOO!" in line three. Another great example within the text is "jibber jabber joo."

The poet plays with the sounds and the meanings of the language in this poem. He uses a combination of real words and made up nonsense words. Some words that are familiar to us include "Clang" and "Ping." These represent real words that have an onomatopoeic meaning or a sound we recognise. Some of the nonsense words include, "Nong" and "Nang." These do not have any meaning and it is up to the reader to make their own meaning of them or to just enjoy them for their sounds.

Challenge your child/ren to create their own nonsense poems. They can play around with familiar language, sounds, rhymes and rhythm. It would also be fun to make up some language of their own in the form of nonsense words and use these within their poems. Have fun and be creative!

Learn to count in four languages

You can [click here](#) for a song to learn to count in English, Spanish, French, and Japanese.

Talk about how the numbers are similar and different and ask your child what he/she notices about them.

English	Spanish	French	Japanese
one	uno (oo-no)	un (ahn)	ichi (each)
two	dos (dose)	deux (deuh)	ni (knee)
three	tres (tress)	trois (twah)	san (sahn)
four	cuatro (kwah-tro)	quatre (katr)	shi (she)
five	cinco (sink-oh)	cinq (sank)	go (goh)
six	sies (sayss)	six (seese)	rok (loh-koo)
seven	siete (syet-tay)	sept (set)	shichi (she-tchee)
eight	ocho (oh-cho)	huit (wheet)	hachi (ha-tchi)
nine	nueve (nwehv-eh)	neuf (nurf)	kyuu (kyoo)
ten	diez (dyess)	dix (deese)	juu (joo)

Language of Art

Expressive arts and design is a great way to develop a child's imagination and creativity. The use of media provides a language to help children to represent and understand their own feelings and ideas. Help your child create a **Language of Life Collage**

You will need:

- Old magazines, newspapers, picture books, and scrap paper
- Coloured pens and pencils
- Scissors and glue
- Cardboard or thick paper to create the collage on



This activity aims to give children a way to explore their values and what is important to them and express these through their own language. Ask your child/ren what makes them feel good about their own and other people's behaviour. Explain that the behaviours and attitudes that we think are important and make us happy are called our 'values'. Encourage your child to question these values and generate associated language to go with them. Ideas to investigate include; honesty, respect, caring for others, determination, love, independence, teamwork etc

Once your child/ren have come up with the words to represent the values they hold dear, encourage them to begin selecting images, words, phrases, or colours from the magazines and newspapers. They should use these to create a collage that they feel reflects their language to live by. This can be picture based, or abstract; it's all about how their words make them feel. They can display their collage to remind them of their core values.

Sign Language

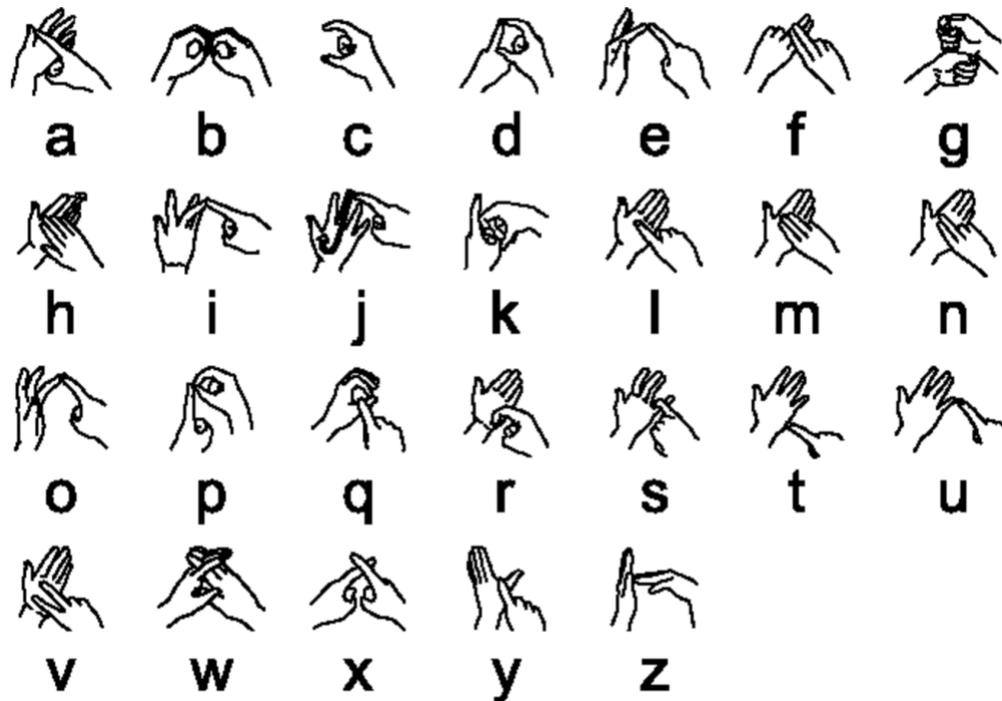
Talk about all of the reasons that people may use sign language. Sign language is helpful for people who cannot hear, but also for people who are nonverbal. Sometimes young children are able to learn some simple signs before they are able to speak. Have a dialogue with your child about sign language using questions like the following:

- What do you know about sign language? Are there signs for letters, words, phrases?
- What are some of the advantages to using sign language?
- How do you think people learn sign language?
- Just like we speak different language, do you think there are also different versions of sign language?

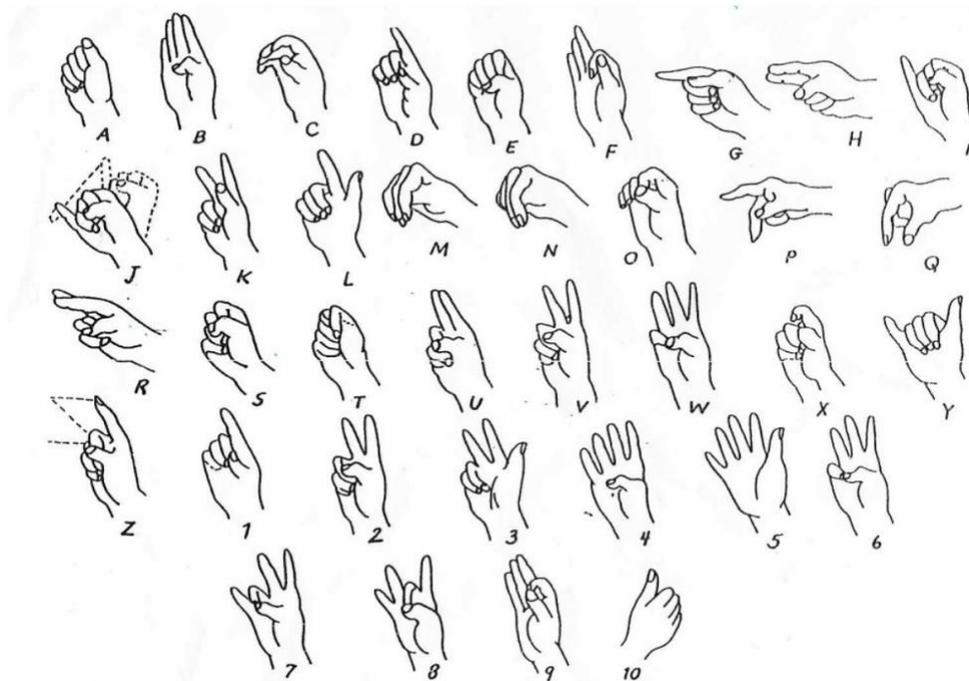
There are actually more than 130 versions of sign language with new ones still being created. On the next page there are two versions of a sign language alphabet. One is British and the other is American. Compare the two alphabets and talk about how they are similar and different. Decide whether or not someone who knows American Sign Language would understand someone who is using British Sign Language and vice versa.

Work with your child(ren) to learn their names in sign language (using one or both versions) and have them practice until they can do it from memory.

British Sign Language



American Sign Language



Code Language

Create your own code language by assigning a symbol, shape, or number to each letter of the alphabet. This becomes your code language key.

Then create secret messages using the code that you created. Leave notes for your child and have them de-code them using the key that you created.

See if your child can respond to you using the code you created.

Descriptive Language Scavenger Hunt**

The goal is to find objects in the house that are named for exactly what they do- for example- toothbrush- you use to brush your teeth.

- Set a time for 10 minutes
- Send everyone in the house find as many objects as they can.
- Come back together and present your objects.
 - Each person presents their object and explains how the name of the object tells what it does.

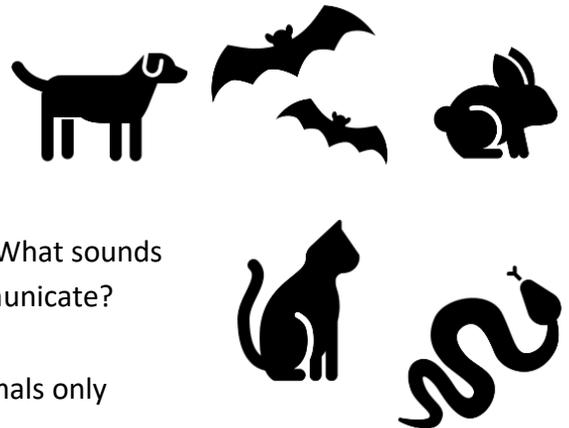
Whoever finds the most wins and gets to decide who has to put everything away 😊

Change the game by finding object that are NOT named for what they do, and then when you come back to present your objects, you have to make-up a name for the object that DOES say what it does.

Animal Language

Animals can't talk, but they do have a way to communicate with each other. Talk about the different ways that animals communicate.

- How do they communicate (ask about specific animals)? What sounds do they make, or what actions do they engage in to communicate?
- What types of communication do you think they have?
- Do you think all animals communicate? Do you think animals only communicate with the same kinds of animals?
- Do animals communicate with humans?



Write or tell story or a comic about your favorite animal or pet suddenly being able speak a language that only the two of you know and understand.

- What would you talk about?
- Would you want others to know about it?
- What would the language involve? Would it be sounds, words, nonverbal, etc....?

Non-Verbal Language

Refer to the strategy guide (linked in the intro) for information about Sorting and Classifying/Venn diagrams.

We can communicate a great deal without ever saying a word. This is called 'Non-verbal Communication' and the language we use for this includes facial expressions, body language, sitting posture and position and eye contact.

It is tricky to always get this language correct, but it is a very important language to learn.

It allows you to show agreement/disagreement, to give someone who is talking confidence, reassurance and encouragement and can show that you are interested and listening to what someone has to say.

Making eye-contact with the speaker	Nodding head	Smiling	Looking at the ground	Yawning
Smirking	Giggling	Tilting your head to the side	Crossing your arms across your chest	Tapping your fingers
Playing with your hair	Picking your nose	Thumbs up	Open arms	Shedding tears
Frowning	Rubbing eyes	Head in hands	Shaking head from side to side	Thumbs down

Sort the non-verbal language cards into sets 'Positive non-verbal language' and 'Negative non-verbal language'. Are there any cards that could go in the centre because they can be positive and negative? Why do you think this is?

Now try placing all the cards along a line with '**Always positive**' at one end and '**Always negative**' at the other.

- Are there any cards that can go at the very end points?
- Which card goes bang in the middle?
- What makes some more positive or more negative than others?

**This is a version of the Opinion line found in the [Strategy Reference Guide](#). You can also use these cards to do Diamond Ranking, which can be found in the Strategy Guide as well.

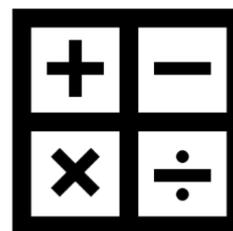
Language of Numbers

Play a game of 'What's My Number' with your child/ren. Write a number on a piece of paper without anyone seeing and fold the paper in half to keep the number secret and place it in front of you.

Your child/ren have to ask a number of questions using mathematical language/vocabulary to try and work out the identity of the hidden number. You can only answer yes or no. They should be discouraged from guessing by giving them 3 lives(guesses) only and 20 questions. Using a whiteboard, flipchart or large piece of paper record the questions that get positive answers eg if they ask if the number is even and the answer is yes, then you would write 'even' on the paper. This will build up a profile of the hidden number.

Encourage your child to use the following mathematical language to ask their questions:

- Odd/even
- Multiple of/in the 'x' times table
- 1 digit/2 digit/3 digit/4 digit number
- Prime number
- Square number
- Factor of/ can divide into 'x'
- Greater than/less than
- In the range of 'x' to 'y'
- Negative number/positive number
- Whole number/ decimal number
- Is the hundreds digit/tens digit/units digit a 5?



It is important to keep the activity fun and engaging. Your child/ren may not be familiar with all of the above language yet and it is important that they access the activity at their level and that you choose numbers within their capability range. We want to challenge them by not making it too easy (this would be a dull game), but too difficult will make the game unpleasant and stressful.

When your child/ren use questions that do not include mathematical language, be positive and encouraging and reinforce the correct vocabulary. Eg.

Child: Does it have 2 numbers in it?

Parent: Good question! You mean is it a 2-digit number, yes it is! Well done.

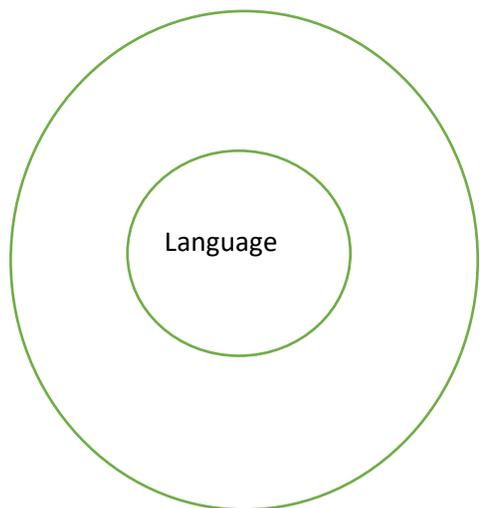
Turn the tables and get your child to choose the hidden number and challenge you to work out what it is.

Another challenge, as well as increasing the complexity of the number, is to reduce the number of questions and lives your child/ren are allowed.

Concept Target**

Together with your child/ren, create a list of vocabulary related to the concept of language.

Here is a list of related vocabulary to start you off using the Concept Target. It would be great if you and your child could add to this list or make your own list. Remember to draw on your discussions from some of the other activities to help to evaluate each word or term.



- Communication
- Words
- Talking
- Symbols
- Signs
- Action
- Sound
- Understanding

Telephone Game

If you have enough people in the family, play the telephone game. You sit in a circle and one person whispers a message into the ear of the person next to them, then that person whispers the message to the next person, etc... until the person who starts the message hears the message. Talk about what happened to the message.

- Was the final message the same as the original one? What happened?
- What can happen when we hear something and then repeat it to someone else? When might this be a problem?
- Is it considered gossiping or untruthful if we just did not hear it right, and then tell someone else?
- How can we make sure that we get someone's message correct?

Forbidden Words Game

Use the cards on the next page to play the game, Forbidden Words. See how many of the words you can get your child to guess- or for older children- that your child can get you to guess. You or your child have to describe the word at the top of the card, however, the words listed below it are "forbidden" and cannot be used.

Now make your own Forbidden Words cards.

- How will you decide which words are "forbidden"?
- Would other people think of different words to be "forbidden"?
- Are some words harder than others to think of "forbidden" words for?

Forbidden Words Game Cards

<p>PARK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play • Swings • Slides • Trees 	<p>CAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive • Wheels • Garage • Steer 	<p>DOG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pet • Bark • Tail • Fur 	<p>SLEEP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Night • Nap • Bed • Rest
<p>HOME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live • Family • Address • Room 	<p>EAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner • Food 	<p>GAME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play • Winner • Loser • Board 	<p>READ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book • Bed • Story • Words
<p>TREE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves • Trunk • Roots • Shade 	<p>BALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round • Bounce • Throw • Roll 	<p>CLOUD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sky • Rain • Fluffy • White 	<p>DANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music • Spin • Twirl • Party
<p>FACE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyes • Nose • Mouth • Head 	<p>PHONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk • Call • Cell • Text 	<p>SCHOOL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn • Class • Teacher • Grade 	<p>SMILE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy • Mouth • Frown • Teeth
<p>CAKE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birthday • Frosting • Candles • Decorate 	<p>BUG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spider • Fly • Lady • Ant 	<p>FRIEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best • Pal • Mate • Play 	<p>CHAIR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit • Table • Sofa • Rocking

Language of Emotions

Support your child/ren to create a mood circle. Explain that we all have a full range of emotions. Sometimes they can feel very big and we can find them difficult to understand and deal with. Sometimes they can be small, and we may not even recognize them. As we are growing and developing our reactions and feelings about things go through many changes. We may feel sad and slow one moment and then energetic and lively the next. At times we may be confused by our moods and find it difficult to find the language to describe how we are feeling. This is normal and creating and using a mood circle can help us to build the emotional language that will communicate with our feelings and moods in a more constructive way.



- Using a paper plate or a circle of card, divide it into 4 or 8 sections depending on how many moods you want to focus on.
- Draw faces or create your own emojis with different moods/emotions for each section.
- Think of different words that relate to that mood and write them in the same section. For example, on the section with a happy face you could write; excited, cheerful, energetic, hopeful, creative, amused etc. Relating to a sad face, you could add, lonely, bored, tired, guilty, embarrassed, sick etc.
- Cut out a little arrow and attach it with a fastener of some kind in the centre of the circle so that it can be rotated to point to the different mood sections.

**If you're feeling fancy, you can take photos of your child acting out all the different types of moods and stick the pictures on the mood circle.

Discuss the mood circle together and review some of the language used and the feelings they relate to. Use the wheel as you talk with your child about their day and encourage them to use the language on the circle to explain how they felt during the experiences they share. The mood circle can be used as a way of opening up a family discussion about how each person's day has gone. This models the fact that experiencing different moods and emotions is a normal part of everyone's day and it is a good opportunity to discuss different ways of dealing with difficult, uncomfortable and negative emotions we may experience.



Other Activities

Weather Watch

Talk with your child about the outside temperature and which temperatures feel warm and which temperatures feel cool. Pick 3 times during the day to check the temperature - first go outside to feel the temperature, then check it online or on your phone. Keep a chart or a list of the temperatures

Have your child write down other observations that they think may impact the weather.

- Is it cloudy?
- Is it nighttime?
- Is it raining?
- Is the wind blowing?

After a few days, have your child try to predict the temperature just by going outside.

Talk about how the outside temperature changes throughout the day, but also throughout the year. See if your child can explain why they think these changes happen.

Five Frame/Ten Frame, Part 2

Use the Five Frame or Ten Frame that you created last week and add another. If you have a pre-schooler, it is best to continue with a five frame, but if you have an early primary student, you can start with a ten frame.

- Review the number sentences you came up with last week.
- Now add the second frame and talk about why you would need a second frame. Hopefully your child will share that you may need a second frame for numbers greater than 5 or 10. If not, using questioning or just put out a pile of buttons or counters that is higher than 5 or 10.
- Lay out combinations of buttons that total more than 5 or 10. For example, make a pile of 4 buttons and a pile of 3 buttons. Or for the ten frame, lay out a pile of 6 buttons and a pile of 7 buttons.
- Work with your child to fill one frame first and then talk about what to do next- begin putting buttons in the 2nd frame.
- Now talk about how you can count them. See if your child can come up with the fact that you can simply start with 5 or with 10 rather than counting all of the buttons in that frame.
- Practice doing this with different combinations of buttons.
- You can also write the number sentences for the problems you create.