

Life Timeline

Targeted skill

Mathematicians collect and record data, that is, they gather and write down information, to help them understand a problem. Young children are learning to collect and record data about their lives in this activity. Further, they are practicing probability and statistics as they construct a simple graph or timeline and use the information from that graph to answer questions.

Materials

- ◆ paper
- ◆ pencil
- ◆ records from your child's early years, such as picture albums or a baby book

What to do

Divide a piece of paper into sections, one for each year of your child's life. Label (or help your child label) each section with your child's age during that year.

Beginning with the current year, write (or draw or help your child write or draw) a few events to represent that year's activities. Continue to add activities for each year of your child's life. Record milestones such as first steps, first word, and first vacation.

Extending the activity

- ❖ This activity can be as simple or complex as you and your child want. Record only a few events for each year at first, then add more as your child's interest indicates. Add mementos that you may have.
- ❖ Add the year to the labels above each year of your child's life. Discuss that years are numbered in order, asking what year would come after (or before) a given year.

Showing Data

Life Timeline (continued)

- ❖ Make this timeline in either a horizontal or vertical format (or both). Young children need to learn that the same information can be displayed in different ways.
- ❖ Share this activity with interested family members, such as grandparents. This gives your child another opportunity to describe the events of his or her life.
- ❖ Help your child glue photographs representative of each year's activities to the timeline. Vacations, family reunions, birth of brothers or sisters, and holiday celebrations are all good choices. Be sure to include things that are special to your family, such as hobbies or customs.
- ❖ Be sure to celebrate your child's accomplishments for each year. Encourage your child to realize that he or she worked hard to master a particular skill that he or she now take for granted. Tell fun or encouraging stories about how he or she worked hard and made mistakes before mastering a skill.
- ❖ Turn this activity into a story time. When describing an event to your child, make sure to describe how you felt, other people's responses, the weather, and any smells or special sounds. Including all these things will help him or her understand how these qualities make stories more interesting.

What your child is practicing

Once young children master a skill, they believe that they have *always* possessed it. Making a timeline of your child's life helps him or her understand change over time, his or her own development, how to organize information, and how to get information from a chart or graph.