

NUMBER SQUARES

Multiplication means adding a number to itself over and over again. These simple activities help your child understand the concept. Squared numbers—like 2×2 , 3×3 , and 4×4 —create literal squares when displayed with cereal O's.

What You Need:

Bowl of cereal O's, white paper, colored markers, scissors, ruler

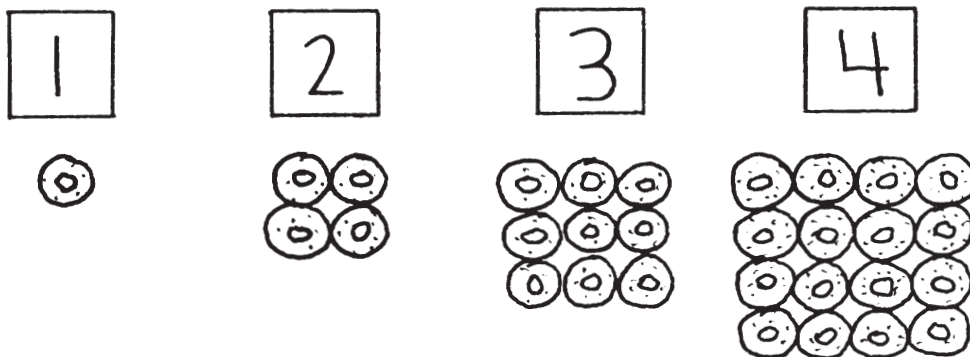
To Prepare:

1. Cut ten 1½- by 1½-inch squares of paper.
2. Write the numbers 1–10 (one number on each paper) to make Number Slips.

Activity 1:

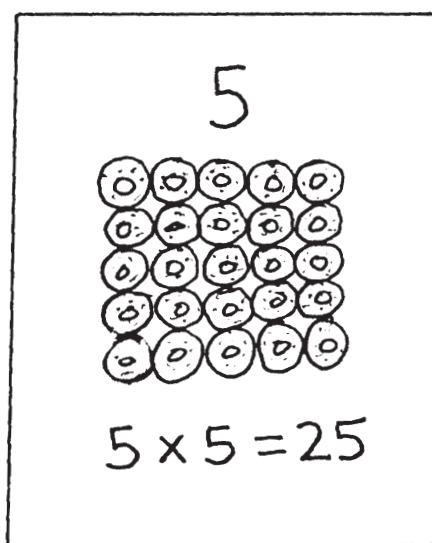
1. Explain that you are going to show how number squares are built.
2. Place the Number Slips 1, 2, and 3 on the table.
3. Place one cereal O's under number 1. Say, "One taken one time is one. One squared is one." Place two sets of cereal O's (as shown on page 71) under number 2 so they form a square. Count the cereal O's. Say, "Two taken two times is four. Two squared is four." Place three sets of three cereal O's under number 3 so they form a square. Count the cereal O's. Say, "Three taken three times is nine. Three squared is nine."

4. If your child shows interest, continue building squares while encouraging him to place the cereal O's and count. If his attention wanders, conclude the activity and return to it on another day.



Variation:

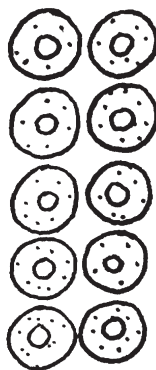
Write numbers and equations on papers, as shown below. Have your child glue on the corresponding cereal O's.



☆ **Activity 2:**

Write multiplication problems that are not squares (such as $2 \times 5 =$, $6 \times 4 =$, and $3 \times 8 =$) on slips of paper and have your child work them. Let's use $2 \times 5 =$ for example. Ask him to read the problem and place two cereal O's beside the card. Say, "Two taken one time." Place a second set of two cereal O's beneath the first set. Say, "Two taken two times." Place a third set of two cereal O's and say, "Two taken three times." Place a fourth set of two cereal O's and say, "Two taken four times." Place the final set of two cereal O's and say, "Two taken five times equals" . . . count the cereal O's, "One, two, three, . . . ten." Now say the whole equation, "Two taken five times equals ten." Have him choose another problem and work it in similar manner.

$$2 \times 5 =$$

**Variation: Multiplication Books**

After your child has worked some multiplication problems and understands the process, give him slips of paper to make his own multiplication book.

Have him follow these steps:

1. Copy the problem on a slip of paper.
2. Find the solution with cereal O's.
3. Write the answer.

When ten slips are completed, cut a bright construction paper cover, staple the pages together at the side, and title it "My Multiplication Book." Have him read you the booklet often to reinforce the lesson. As an ongoing project, he could also make a book of ten pages for each number 1–10.