SUM IT UP

Dear parent or guardian: This is a summary of the key ideas your child is learning in mathematics. You can use this summary as background as you support your child's work. Some suggestions for simple activities you can do with your child are also included.

1 Identifying Coins

Recognizing Coins

Students at this level should have opportunities to see nickels, dimes, quarters, $1 coins (loonies), $2 coins (toonies) and, if possible, pennies. It is fine to tell students that stores and banks do not use pennies anymore.

The nickel 

The dime 

The quarter 

The $1 coin (loonie) 

The $2 coin (toonie) 

If asked what differentiates the various coins, students might describe the following distinguishing characteristics:

The Colours of the Coins

Pennies and $1 coins may appear to be "gold," while nickels, dimes, and quarters look "silver." $2 coins have two colours.

The Size of the Coins

The coins come in various widths and thicknesses, the dime being the thinnest.

The Pictures on the Coins

Although one side of Canadian coins shows the monarch, the other side shows a variety of pictures.

- The penny shows a maple leaf.
- The nickel shows a beaver.
- The dime shows a boat (the racing schooner *Bluenose*).
- The quarter shows a caribou (not an elk or a moose — a common mistake).
- The $1 coin shows a loon.
- The $2 coin shows a polar bear.

Commemorative coins may look different, marking particular events.

Knowing the Value of Coins

Students should associate the values of the penny with 1 cent, the nickel with 5 cents, the dime with 10 cents, and — after they know the numbers 25 and 100 — the quarter and the $1 coin with 25 cents and 100 cents, respectively. Because students have not learned numbers beyond 100, there is no need to focus on the toonie being worth 200¢ or on the relationship between cents and dollars. The toonie can simply be called a $2 coin.

1¢ 5¢ 10¢ 25¢ 100¢ 200¢

Students can examine coins to find the value of the coins, which always appears on the back.

Helping Your Child

When you are shopping and using coins, let your child identify the coins you are using. Ask him or her to tell you about each coin, including its name and its value.

Over time, collect some coins in a jar. Take opportunities to empty the jar and let your child handle the coins. What does he or she notice about the physical features of the coins? You can help by pointing out some features.
If you have a few pennies, include them in your money jar. Even though the penny is not currently in circulation, children will benefit from knowing what we mean by 1 cent, that is, the value of a penny. The values of the nickel, dime, and quarter are all indicated in cents.

Notes

The dollar unit ($1) may come up as students talk about $2 coins. There is no need to explain that $2 is equivalent to 200¢ at this time.

Because commemorative coins look different from standard ones, it is important not to overemphasize the notion that all dimes look the same, all quarters look the same, and so on.

Definitions

cent (¢): a measurement unit for counting money; the value of one penny

penny: a 1¢ coin

nickel: a 5¢ coin

dime: a 10¢ coin

quarter: a 25¢ coin

$1 coin (loonie): a 100¢ coin, also called one dollar

$2 coin (toonie): a $2 coin