Subtract Fractions

LESSON 13

Dear Family,

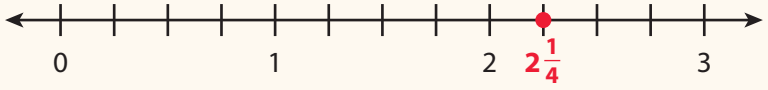
This week your child is learning to subtract fractions with unlike denominators.

Your child might see a problem like this:

> *Hailey needs $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups of almond milk for a recipe. She has $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. How much more almond milk does Hailey need?*

One way to model subtracting $\frac{1}{2}$ from $2\frac{1}{4}$ is with a number line.

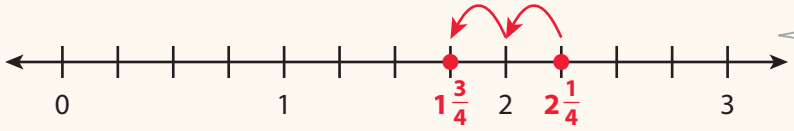
Start at the point $2\frac{1}{4}$.



Each whole on the number line is divided into 4 equal parts.

To subtract $\frac{1}{2}$, you need to find a common denominator with the fraction in $2\frac{1}{4}$. The number 4 is a multiple of 2 and 4, so 4 is a common denominator.

Because $\frac{1}{2}$ is equivalent to $\frac{2}{4}$, you can start at $2\frac{1}{4}$ and jump back (left) $\frac{2}{4}$.



Each jump back is $\frac{1}{4}$.

The number line shows that $2\frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{2} = 1\frac{3}{4}$. Hailey needs $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups of almond milk.

Some other ways your child can think about subtracting fractions include using fraction bars or using multiplication to replace the given fractions with equivalent fractions that have the same denominator.

Invite your child to share what he or she knows about subtracting fractions by doing the following activity together.

ACTIVITY SUBTRACTING FRACTIONS

Do this activity with your child to subtract fractions.

Materials ruler, yardstick, or measuring tape, and a variety of household objects

Work with your child to compare the lengths or heights of various objects around your home.

- Find two objects and measure their lengths. Measure the length of one object to the nearest $\frac{1}{2}$ inch and the length of the second object to the nearest $\frac{1}{8}$ or $\frac{1}{16}$ inch.

  Examples: lengths of fork and spoon, lengths of hand and foot

- Determine how much longer one object is than the other.

- Continue to practice adding fractions by finding the combined length of two or more objects and then comparing the combined length to another length.

- Find the combined length of your hand and foot. Next, find the combined length of a family member's hand and foot. Then find the difference between the two combined lengths.

Look for other real-world examples of subtracting fractions with your child.