

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

1. Choose an objective.
2. Select manipulatives and related materials that would be the best choice for the age, ability, and learning style of the child.
3. Introduce the objective with manipulatives or illustrations.
4. Find ways to help the child see the usefulness of mastering the objective.
5. Provide practice applying the skill.
6. Once the objective has been mastered, proceed to another objective.*

*If the student seems unable to achieve mastery after you have tried various manipulatives and approaches to help him learn, set it aside for a time. The child may not be ready for that goal, and time to mature may be all that is necessary. Select another objective in a different area in order to provide a change of pace that will provide successful experiences. For example, if the problem was in division, switch to measurement, geometry, or logic problems.

HOW DO I CHOOSE AN OBJECTIVE?

Your long-term goal may be to develop ability in problem solving. A single objective could be learning one strategy: choosing addition or subtraction in a word problem. The objective should be small enough in scope to be mastered in a reasonable amount of time.

It is not necessary to cover or master a topic at any particular grade level. Rather, all topics should be introduced when the child is ready (and here you may try, fail, and put things aside for a while) and then reviewed and practiced until it is eventually mastered with understanding. **Grades are included in this guide to provide a sense of what may be expected at various ages, not to dictate what or when something is taught.**

You are free to choose topics and make up objectives within that topic to suit the child. It is the teacher's nervous expectation that something be completed at a specific time that pushes the child into a frustrating pace. When the focus shifts to understanding and mastery, a child works eagerly, but at his own pace. In each topic *the student should understand the concept, develop ability with the skill (computation, algorithms, estimation) and solve problems that apply the understanding and skill.* Some problems should connect the skill to its usefulness in real life. Older children can also handle problems that are abstract—pure math.