About How Much? Cards

Predict First

You set your things on the counter. The cashier scans them one by one, and the screen lights up: one hundred eighty-two dollars. You haven't added anything up. But you know that number is wrong.

That feeling, that gut sense of about how much something should be, is one of the most useful tools in all of math. And it's the one most children are never taught to reach for.

How to play

1. Cut the cards apart. Before your child solves one, ask: "About how much do you think?" They only need a sense of where it should land.
2. Have them write the guess in the first box, then work it out and write the answer in the second.
3. Ask: "Does that fit?" If the two are far apart, look again together.

Watch for

At first, the guesses may be wild, and that's alright. The goal isn't to be right. It's to get used to thinking about size before thinking about steps. With time, the guesses get closer, and the child starts to trust them.

At the table, it can sound like this

"Forty-eight and thirty-six. About how much?"

"Around eighty-five."

"You got seven hundred fourteen. Does that fit?"

"No. That's way too big. Let me look again."

Number Sense

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