Plan Ahead: A Math Card Game

There's strategy in numbers! Challenge your first grader for the best score in this math game. Examine the cards to find the largest value. Whichever card you pick up will limit what the other player(s) can take. Add up your cards to see who's won!

Plan Ahead is a great way to improve critical thinking skills, which are necessary to succeed in math. Your child will use his knowledge of numeric value and combine it with strategy in order to win the game. Practice makes perfect, and this is definitely a game you'll be wanting to play again and again!

Skills:

- Numerical value
- Adding
- Strategy

What You Need:

- One deck of playing cards (Print a deck.)
- Pencil and paper (to add up scores)

What You Do:

1. Shuffle the deck. Place the top 9 cards in a 3x3 array, face up.
2. The first player picks up a card and keeps it. The goal is to select the highest possible card.
3. The second player then picks up a card *from the same row or column only*.
4. Continue picking up cards until no more plays are possible.
5. Each player adds up the total value of the cards they have collected. (Aces count as 1, while face cards count 10.) The highest score wins.

Variations:

- Remove face cards from the deck, as their values can be confusing for younger children.
- Play the game with a larger array. Use 16 cards in a 4x4 array, or 25 in a 5x5 array.
- Create a challenge by making the black cards count positively and the red cards negatively.
- Place a mystery card in the array, face down.

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