



Learning about Numbers

Your child was born to count! With your help in learning to understand numbers, your child will be more likely to do well in school. Infants generally are not able to focus on numbers, but when toddlers and preschoolers understand quantity and how numbers work, they are better able to grasp mathematical ideas in schools. Here are things you can do with your child to help build her understanding of numbers. Try these suggestions:

INFANT:

- Read simple board books with your child. Point to and count the objects on each page. For example, tell your infant: "Look! There are three birds." Using your finger, point to and count each bird.
- Use numbers when you talk with your baby: "Let's put on your socks, one sock, two socks."
- Sing songs and rhymes to your baby. Choose ones with lots of numbers. For example: One, Two Buckle My Shoe or Ten Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed.

TODDLER:

- Play the "Where Is?" game with your toddler. Ask: "Where's your NOSE?" You have one nose." After he shows you, say: "That's right! You have one nose." Continue the game, asking about a new body part each time.
- Make a game of counting with your child. During a snack, ask: "How many grapes are there?" Have your child guess the number. Count together to find the answer.
- Count with your child during everyday activities: when getting dressed, count the number of buttons on your child's shirt. At the playground, count the number of times you push your child on the swing. At the grocery store, count the items that go in your shopping cart.

PRESCHOOLERS:

- Play Follow the Leader. Take four giant steps forward and two baby steps sideways. Ask your child to follow.
- At bedtime, use story books for counting practice. Ask your child to help you to count, for example, the number of dogs in a picture. When objects are in a line, encourage your child to count from left to right.
- Play "Go Fish." This will help your child to count and recognize numbers.
- After your child draws or paints pictures, write your child's age or the date on each picture. Show your child the numbers and talk about them.
- Look at coins and dollar bills. Explain to your child what each is worth.