



PARENT *handout*

Beginning to Count

Your child may be able to say “1-2-3-4-5” in the right order. And it is a thrill to hear her count! But she may not realize that each number has value – that is, each number stands for a specific quantity of something.

Your child is building number concepts. She does this through discoveries she makes while she plays. Eventually, she will:

1. Say “Three!” when she is talking about three objects.
2. Recognize the numeral “3.”
3. Know that three is more than two.

Your child will make many mistakes at first. She will rely on appearances to compare amounts. For example, she may say three big cars are more than four smaller cars. And she may insist a cookie broken into two pieces is more than a whole cookie.

When counting, she may skip objects or count the same object twice. She may not realize the last number is especially important because it’s the final count. This is normal when children are learning number concepts. As she uses number concepts more, your child will gradually make fewer mistakes.



REFLECTION

Take time to watch your child.

When are some great times to count?

When can you use counting to make everyday tasks more fun?

When your child counts, does she often skip the same number?

Ways to help your child learn about numbers

Her play naturally uses a variety of pre-number activities. She compares, matches, classifies, organizes, forms patterns, measures, and sorts. Through these activities, she combines images, meanings, and language to build number concepts.

> Count

Have fun counting all day long: Count stairs as you climb them, pieces of toast on her plate, toothbrushes in the bathroom. Counting can also entertain her while in the car, waiting in line, or at the doctor’s office.

> Sort

Allow your child to learn by doing. Give her chances to divide objects into groups. She could divide blocks to share with a friend or divide a package of cookies to share with a sister.

> Compare

Encourage your child to compare the number of items in two sets by matching them up one-to-one. Lay a napkin next to each plate. Put a straw in each cup. Wrap a blanket around each doll.