



This is the fifth in a series of Learning on the Go Tips about early math skills that help children get ready for school.

Learning on the Go: Early Learning Tips for Young Children

Counting and Recognizing Numbers

Counting and learning to recognize numbers may be the most familiar “early math” concept for parents. Have fun while you try out these ideas:

- While getting your baby or toddler dressed, count: “One arm, two arms—and one head!” Read books together and find things to count: “One, two, three puppies on this page!” Sing songs and say rhymes that include counting, such as “One, Two, Buckle my Shoe”, “Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed”, or “The Ants Go Marching One by One”.
- Make a game out of estimating and then counting with your toddler or preschooler as you go about your daily chores. For example: “How many things are we putting in the grocery cart?” “How many apple slices are you having for snack?” “Let’s count the stoplights between here and home.”
- With preschoolers, talk about the numbers that you see around you—speed limit signs, numbers on money, numbers in books and calendars. Play number games with your child, such as Follow My Leader (count the steps you take!), Chutes and Ladders, Candyland, Go Fish, or Dominoes. Use markers to write numbers together. Include numbers in any directions you give: “Please put four spoons on the table.” As you count, touch one object for each number that is counted aloud. Also, spread some items out on a table and count them; then put them in a pile and count them again to show that the number remains the same.

These are just some of the ways to make counting and numbers part of your child’s day!

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