



## Number Concepts

Counting is important because it helps children learn number sequence, but even before counting, children need to develop a basic understanding of numbers. Three important number concepts are one-to-one correspondence (each object is counted only once); cardinality (the last object counted is the total number of objects); and invariance (the number of objects doesn't change if they are configured differently--for instance, spread out or placed in a circle). Here are some ways to help your child develop these basic number concepts.

**Count objects in everyday contexts.** Count the number of buttons on your child's shirt as you button them, the number of oranges he helps you put in the grocery bag at the supermarket, the number of forks needed to set the table, or the number of stairs you go up to the front door. Start with small numbers (no more than five) and add a few as your child is ready for a challenge.



## Tips to Reduce Allergens in Your Home

Follow these expert tips from interior designer Robin Wilson to reduce allergic asthma triggers and get your home in tip top shape for entertaining.

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**Put small objects in a row.** Gather some coins and have your child count them. After she has counted them, rearrange them in a circle, in a row, or spread them out, and ask her again to count the objects. Don't be surprised if she has to count them again. But if she automatically answers without counting, you'll know he has mastered number invariance.

**Find objects that go together.** If your child is having difficulty with one-to-one correspondence, find objects that pair well, such as spoons and forks, cups and saucers, horse and cowboy figurines, and ask him to pair them together. As he does, have him count each set of objects to help reinforce the idea that each pair consists of the same number.

**Play board games that involve counting.** Simple games like Candy Land and Chutes and Ladders are great for helping kids recognize numbers on a dice and count moves. Other, more complex games involve two dice instead of one or doubling the number that comes up for each move. Play the card game War using a deck of cards; make it easy at the start by including only cards up to five, and then gradually make it more complex by having each player put out two cards. The highest sum of the two cards wins!

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## Geometry and Spatial Understanding

Children can develop a basic understanding of geometry and spatial relations by playing with blocks and other building toys. Encourage geometry-related skills with these ideas.

**Identify shapes in your home.** Play a simple game of finding basic shapes around the home, such as rectangles in light switches, squares in windowpanes, circles in clocks, and so forth. Ask your child to explain how she differentiates each shape by their defining features (for instance, a triangle has three connected sides) and non-defining features (such as the position or size of the triangle).

**Talk about picture placement in a book.** When reading a storybook, use spatial language to talk about the placement of pictures. Ask related questions such as "Where is the moon? Is it above the tree? Is it under the tree?" Or reference sizes by asking, "Is the hippopotamus bigger than the monkey? Which animal is bigger? Which animal is smaller?"

**Make a map of your home.** Practice more spatial language by helping your child make a map of his bedroom or the backyard. As he places and spaces out furniture, windows, and closets, or gardens, trees, and bushes, ask him questions about where they're located and how close together they are.

## Measurement

There are many forms of measurement to learn (length, height, weight, size, quantities) and many tools for measuring. Embed measuring concepts into everyday activities.

**Measure while you cook or bake.** Fill measuring cups with water or flour and measuring spoons with extract to introduce your kids to the concept of whole numbers and fractions. Ask questions such as "Can you fill a half cup? Can you fill one teaspoon?"

**Guess weight at the supermarket.** The next time you visit the grocery store, pull two different items from the shelves and ask your child which one is heavier: "Is it the can of soup or the box of crackers?" Children will learn how to understand the concepts of heaviness and lightness.

**Compare feet sizes.** Place your foot next to your child's foot and ask her which is longer or bigger. Have a ruler or tape measure on hand to compare the sizes and help her differentiate between long and short, large and small.

<http://www.parents.com/kids/education/math-and-science/playful-math-activities-for-preschoolers/>

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# Letters and Sounds: Practical Ideas for Parents

By: Texas Education Agency



Provide your child with the opportunity to learn that written words are made up of letters that match the sounds in spoken words.

Children can be taught to match the sounds with letters in an orderly and direct way. For example, the letter *n* matches the /n/ sound in *nurse*).

Here are some activities to try:

- Make letter-sounds and have your children write the letter or letters that match the sounds.
- Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words (for example, if the letters "p-e-n" spell *pen*, how do you spell *hen*?).
- Write letters on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your children say the sounds (for example, the /d/ sound for the letter *d*).
- Teach your children to match the letters in their names with the sounds in their names.
- Point out words that begin with the same letter as your children's names (for example, *John* and *jump*). Talk about how the beginning sounds of the words are alike.
- Use alphabet books and guessing games to give your children practice in matching letters and sounds. A good example is the game, "I am thinking of something that starts with /t/."
- Write letters on pieces of paper and put them in a paper bag. Let your children reach into the bag and take out letters. Have them say the sounds that match the letters.
- Take a letter and hide it in your hand. Let your children guess in which hand is the letter. Then show the letter and have your children say the letter name and make the sound (for example, the letter *m* matches the /m/ sound as in *man*).
- Make letter-sounds and ask your children to draw the matching letters in cornmeal or sand.
- Take egg cartons and put a paper letter in each slot until you have all the letters of the alphabet in order. Say letter-sounds and ask your children to pick out the letters that match those sounds.

*Adapted from: Beginning Reading Instruction: Practical Ideas for Parents. (1996). Texas Education Agency.*

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/letters-and-sounds-practical-ideas-parents#comment-form>

# READING TIPS

**Books build better brains.**

Reach Out and Read encourages all parents to make reading with their children part of their daily routine.

## General

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- Make reading part of every day, even for just a few minutes.
- Have fun.
- Talk about the pictures. You do not have to read the book to tell a story.
- Let your child turn the pages.
- Show your child the cover page. Explain what the story is about.
- Run your finger along the words as you read them.
- Silly sounds, especially animal sounds, are fun to make.
- Choose books about events in your child's life such as starting preschool, going to the dentist, getting a new pet, or moving to a new home.
- Make the story come alive. Create voices for the story characters.
- Ask questions about the story. What do you think will happen next? What is this?
- Let your child ask questions about the story. Talk about familiar activities and objects.
- Let your child retell the story.
- Visit your local library often.

## Reading with Your Baby

- Hold your baby on your lap while you read.
- Babies like...
  - board books;
  - pictures of babies;
  - rhymes and songs from the same book over and over;
  - and when you point at pictures - this is how babies learn!

## Reading with Your 1-Year-Old

- Let your toddler move around while you are reading.
  - Name the pictures - this is how toddlers learn new words.
  - Read labels and signs wherever you go.
  - Toddlers like ...
    - the same book over and over;
    - a book at bedtime;
    - to choose and hold the book;
    - books about food, trucks, animals, and children;
    - and books with a few words.
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## Reading with Your 2-Year-Old

- Read labels and signs wherever you go.
- Keep different books around the house and let your child choose.
- Two-year-olds like ...
  - to help turn the pages;
  - to fill in the words in a story they know;
  - to point and name pictures;
  - to hear the same book over and over;
  - books that are silly;
  - and animal books and animal noises.

## Reading with Your Preschool Child

- Have your child sit close or on your lap while reading.
- Ask questions about the story.
- Let your child tell you stories.
- Make weekly visits to the children's room at the library so your child can choose more books.
- Children like ...
  - longer books that tell stories;
  - books without words;