

Numeracy: Counting and Number Recognition

Numeracy is about counting and numbers as well as understanding measurement, money, weight, awareness of time and how to handle information. Through play and daily activities children can develop the numeracy skills that are so necessary for everyday living.



What do we mean by 'counting'?

Counting is being able to reckon the sum total of items or objects. It is the first of the number processes that children learn and leads on to the subtraction process and eventually multiplication and division. It can involve estimation skills and developing an understanding of 'more/less than'.

It is important when you first start counting with your child that you get them to 'touch count' which means that they put their finger on each object as they count out the numbers, or alternatively move an object from one pile to another as they count it. This avoids counting an object more than once.

As they progress, children often become able to look at a small group of objects and tell 'how many' without actually having to count out each item. In time they will learn to 'count on' to add and 'count back' to subtract.



What do we mean by 'number recognition'?

Number recognition involves recognising the symbols that denote particular quantities. It involves recognition of the actual numeral and also a sense of the amount that numeral denotes.

Children need to learn the names of the numbers and the order in which they increase, gradually developing an understanding of which numbers denote a larger amount than others. This is important for 'counting on' and 'counting back' as described.

Numerals also denote order such as first/1st, second/2nd and third/3rd and so on. They help us create sequences and patterns in all sorts of things, for example, knitting, threading beads, repeat patterns on fabrics.

Depending on your child's age and stage of development, please turn over to find some suggestions to try at home ➡



Some suggestions to help your child develop counting skills

- Sing number songs and rhymes together.
- Count fingers and toes with your baby when putting on gloves, socks or getting dried.
- Tell stories that include numbers as this will help your child to understand about the order of numbers.
- Encourage your child to place their finger on objects as you count out loud. This will help them count objects only once as they count.
- Encourage counting forwards and backwards to build confidence with counting.
- There are lots of opportunities to encourage counting as you go about your daily routine. Count steps as you climb the stairs, the number of dogs you see in the park, items on the conveyor belt at the supermarket, red cars you see on the road or in the car park.
- Count real objects, for example, cups, shoes, socks, packets. As your child becomes more confident doing this, begin to add and take away. For example 'If I add 3, how many will I have?'



Some suggestions to help your child develop number recognition

- Play number spotting games at home or at the shops and look for numbers on packages, clocks, coins, buses and car registrations.
- Look for numbers on houses and flats.
- Look for notices and signs when you are out that have numbers on them, for example, speed signs, phone numbers.
- Play number games with your child, for example, matching games, number bingo, snap.
- Ask your child to make numbers using sand, paint, glitter or dough.
- Encourage your child to look and identify the numbers on the cooker, washing machine and clock.
- When cooking or baking ask your child to tell you how much of each ingredient is required.
- Have fun with numbers and make sequences and patterns together, grouping items into 2's, 5's or 10's.
- Use words such as first, second or third to help your child understand the order of things.
- When out shopping ask your child to identify the numbers in the lift. Press the button for the required floor. Ask questions such as 'Is this the first floor?'



Hopefully these suggestions have sparked some ideas of your own. Have fun trying them with your child.

