

# 4 Counting

Learning to count takes practice. As children start counting they are learning that:

- 1) The numbers have an order in which they are said. As they are learning, they will often skip a number. This is normal.
- 2) Then they learn to count objects one at a time. Counting objects in a short line is the easiest.
- 3) Later, they learn to count other arrangements of objects. The objects can be counted in any order and the total number stays the same.
- 4) At last, they learn that the last number counted tells 'how many' in the group.

*Our greatest national resource is the minds of our children.  
-- Walt Disney*



Mathematics, Teaching and Learning  
600 Washington St SE  
Olympia, WA 98504

<http://www.k12.wa.us/>

# EARLY MATH

All children and adults need math skills. Math is in everything we do, such as:

Telling time

Cooking

Sports

Shopping

Business dealings

Transportation

Being ready to learn math when starting kindergarten gives your child an important boost. Math skills are needed for success in school and in life. Parents and other adults can help children gain these skills.

# 1 2

# 3



# 3 The Importance of Numbers for Your Pre-school Child

Children naturally love numbers. They can learn about numbers in many ways through daily play. The more they explore counting, numbers, and shapes the better prepared they will be for kindergarten.

Important skills for children to know and be able to do before kindergarten include:

Saying the sequence of numbers (one, two, three, ...)

Counting objects up to 10 and answering, "How many?"

Comparing objects to say which is bigger or smaller, longer or shorter, lighter or heavier

Sorting objects by color, shape, or size

Naming the shapes

Research shows that the best indicator of later achievement in school is the number sense children have when they enter kindergarten. Research also tells us that young children can learn much more about number than we previously realized. It is important, then, to provide children, at an early age, with many experiences that will help them build their understanding of numbers.

It is essential that parents and caretakers have a positive attitude about mathematics when working with children. Many parents understand that reading is necessary for success in school. However, it is critical that parents realize the important role that number sense plays in a child's thinking and reasoning skills. When adults take an active interest in helping children see and use numbers in their world, children will show that they have a remarkable ability to reason and solve problems.



## 4 Making Math Fun

Children learn about the world around them through play and by talking with adults. Parents can watch their children at play and ask them questions such as:

"How many are there?"

"Which is bigger?"

"Can you bring me two spoons?"

"Can we count with blocks?"

When reading to your child, treat it like a conversation and ask questions such as, "How many dinosaurs are there? If another dinosaur comes, how many would there be?" Asking, "How do you know?" is a good way to help children understand numbers.

Simple board games often help children learn math skills. Games can be a fun activity for the whole family. Playing with blocks is another fun way to count and compare objects. The more practice children have with numbers, the more they will develop their math skills.

