Counting and Numbers

Counting and numbers should be a big part of a child’s day. The more he hears numbers repeated and counts objects in a natural setting, the better prepared he will be to learn math when he starts school. You can count how many pieces of cheese you put on his plate, count how many cars he is playing with, or how many fingers he have.

Nursery rhymes and songs have a rhythm to them that will help your child pick up the patterns of counting numbers. Songs like “Five Little Ducks” or “Two Little Blackbirds” teach numbers, patterns and sequence. You can find videos of counting songs on YouTube if you are not familiar with the words or how to sing them.

Make counting and numbers a part of your child’s daily routine. It makes math concepts fun and relevant for little minds.

Featured Book

Ten Black Dots, by Donald Crews

Simple pictures and text describe what dots can be. “Two dots can be the eyes of a fox” or “nine dots can be the pennies in your piggy bank.” This book will help your child learn to count from 1-10 and to identify circles within ordinary objects that they see.

Donald Crews won a Caldecott medal for his artwork in Freight Train and Truck. Other books by Donald Crews:

Choosing quality books:
American Library Association (ALA) Awards

Though many picture books are considered high-quality for children, choosing award-winning books such as those sponsored by the ALA are a good way to begin introducing your child to the best children’s literature.

The Geisel Award (Dr. Seuss) is presented each year to the best American book in English for beginning readers.

The Caldecott Honor is awarded each year to the artist of the best-illustrated American picture book for children.

Look for these gold or silver medals at your local library.
More fun with *Ten Black Dots*...

**Count me in!** As you read this book with your toddler help her count the items on each page. Touch (or help her touch) each item as you count it aloud. “Let’s count the wheels: 1, 2, 3…” Being able to touch an item and count it out loud is an important skill for young children to develop.

Play lots of counting games with your baby or toddler, such as this one:

**One Little Baby**

One little baby, rocking in a tree.  
*(Hold up finger then rock in palm.)*  
Two little babies, splashing in the sea.  
*(Hold up two fingers, splash hands.)*  
Three little babies, crawling on the floor.  
*(Three fingers, make crawling motions.)*  
Four little babies, banging on the door.  
*(Four fingers, pound on imaginary door.)*  
Five little babies, playing hide and seek.  
*(Five fingers, cover up eyes.)*

Keep your eyes closed tight now,  
Until I say…  
**PEEK!**  
*(Hands away from eyes)*

**Song to sing with your child:**

**This Old Man**

This old man, he played one,  
He played knick knack with his thumb,  
With a knick, knack, paddy whack,  
Give the dog a bone;  
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played two,  
He played knick knock on my shoe,  
With a knick, knack, ...

Three, on his knee  
Eight, on my gate  
Four, on the door  
Nine, rise and shine  
Five, jazz and jive  
Ten, in my den  
Six, with his sticks  
Eleven, up in heaven  
Seven, with a pen  
Twelve, on the shelves

See a video of “This Old Man” at  

**What your library can do for you…**

You can read hundreds of free online books with your child by visiting your local library’s website and clicking on Tumblebooks™.

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**Good books to build counting skills…**

*Big Fat Hen*, by Keith Baker

*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault

*Counting Kisses*, by Karen Katz

*Miss Spider’s Tea Party: A Counting Book*, by David Kirk

*Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes*, by Mem Fox

*Counting in the Garden*, by Emily Hruby