

Number Sense

Gaining the sense of a number comes from counting in sets and recognizing which quantities are greater than, less than, or equal to other quantities. One of the best ways to teach this is also the most fun—play simple board games that require children to count out the spaces of their moves.

Guessing Numbers

Think of a number that your child knows. Say, “I’m thinking of a number between 1 and 10.” Give clues such as, “It is greater than 2 and less than 6.” Let your child guess the number, and then switch roles.

Setting the Table

Have your child set the table for dinner. Ask questions such as, “How many forks?” “How many spoons?” “How many plates?” “How many glasses?” “How many salt and pepper shakers?” You might want to set out fewer forks than spoons and ask, “Are there more forks or spoons? How many more forks do we need to make an equal number of forks and spoons?”

Number Match

Cut out or gather several equal-sized pieces of paper. On one page, help your child glue pictures of people, animals, or things cut from a magazine. On another, write the number that matches how many objects are in the picture. Make several of these. Turn the picture cards and number cards face down. Your child should then try to match the picture card with the corresponding number card.

Number Sets

Take a cup of colored buttons or candies. Give your child the buttons or candies to sort into colored groups. Ask how many there are in each group. Discuss which groups have more or less than the others and which groups are equal.

Can Toss

Take three to five clean, opened cans. Cover the top edge with masking tape so there are no sharp edges. Use a black marker or crayon to write a number on each can. Make a small ball out of masking tape, foil, or paper. Line up the cans on the floor and let your child toss the ball into the can. Then name an action, such as hopping, clapping, or counting, and have your child do that action as many times as the number on the can.

Books to Read

Here are some books you may want to read together:

Quack and Count by Keith Baker

Miss Spider’s Tea Party by David Kirk

When Sheep Cannot Sleep by Satoshi Kitamura

Bean Thirteen by Matthew McElligott

12 Ways to Get to 11 by Eve Merriam

One Gorilla by Atsuko Morozumi

Each Orange Had 8 Slices by Giganti Paul Jr. and Donald Crews

One Is a Snail, Ten Is a Crab: A Counting by Feet Book by April Pulley Sayre, Jeff Sayre and Randy Cecil

Max’s Toys by Rosemary Wells

Teeth, Tails, & Tentacles: An Animal Counting Book by Christopher Wormell