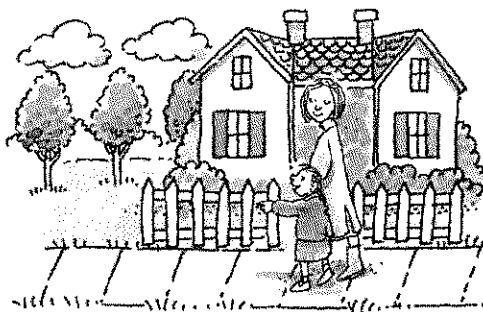


Counting the House



Targeted skill

Young children are learning to associate a numeral, such as 4 or 2, with that number of objects; for example, four blocks or two dogs.

What to do

Using familiar objects makes learning to count more meaningful for your child. Challenge your child to count the windows in your house. Then walk through the house with your child and point to each window, helping your child keep count.

Extending the activity

- ✦ Write down the numeral that represents the number of objects you counted. Keep a journal, "Objects in Our House." On each page, have your child write (or draw) the object and write the numeral that represents how many of them there are in your house. Don't forget to count items in your kitchen (forks, knives, spoons, plates, cups, glasses), garage (screwdrivers, gardening tools, wrenches), pantry (cans, bottles, sodas), bedroom (stuffed animals, books, shirts, pants), and so on.
- ✦ Your child can make number labels for each object. Have your child create a series of number cards, with a numeral on each one. Then he or she attaches the 1 card to the first object counted, the 2 card to the second object, and so on.

Counting

Counting the House (continued)

- ✦ If your child finds it confusing to keep track of what number comes next, gather a handful of small objects (for example, beans, cubes, blocks) to use for counting. For each window your child finds, he or she can take one of the beans as a counter. After all of the windows have been identified, you and your child can count the number of beans. Also, you can use a different counter for each room, such as beans for the windows in the bedroom, cubes for windows in the living room, and so on. Then you can determine a total for the number of windows in the house.
- ✦ Take advantage of any opportunity to count. For example, when you are in the car or walking down the street, ask your child to count the number of houses (or front steps, trees, dogs) you pass. When you are in line at a fast-food restaurant, ask him or her to count the number of people in line and so on.

More questions to ask

As your child gets better at counting, ask him or her to make predictions about the number of objects around you. For example, if he or she counts five people in line, ask how many legs (or ears, eyes, noses) those people have. Extend this conversation to explore other groupings of numbers, for example, "If there were two cows in a field, how many legs would there be?" Help your child make connections among numbers in this way.

What your child is practicing

Understanding that numbers have an assigned value can be a hard concept for young children, as is the concept of "one more" or "one less." Practicing these ideas (and repeating them over and over) helps your child make these connections.