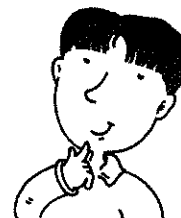


# Number Concentration

## Targeted skill

Remembering how the lines go together to form a numeral is hard for young children. It is especially hard when more than one arrangement of lines makes the same numeral, as in 4 and 4. Just a small difference of a slanted line meeting a straight one at the top or two straight lines pointing up can indicate totally different numerals to children. Be consistent in how you form the numerals in the beginning, and then show your child the variations as his or her confidence increases.



## Materials

- ◆ index cards
- ◆ felt-tip markers

## What to do

This game is a simpler version of the commercially available games of Memory or Concentration. On index cards write the numerals 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Create two groups of identical cards. Be sure to form the numerals the same way that your child sees them written at school.

### To play:

1. Pick three of the numerals that your child is familiar with and place those pairs facedown on the playing surface.
2. Challenge your child to turn over one card at a time, searching for the two cards that match. When your child finds a matching pair, compliment him or her on the match and repeat the name of that pair, saying, "Yes, those cards both have a 2 on them."
3. Remove the pairs from the playing area until all matches are made.
4. As your child learns the names of more numerals, add more cards to the game until he or she has learned to recognize them all.

### Number Concentration *(continued)*

#### Extending the activity

- ✦ Use this game to help your child learn how to form the numerals as well. Encourage him or her to use a finger to trace the numerals you have written on the cards, starting at the top of each form. For example, say, "Yes, you make a 2 by starting at the top, curving around to zoom to the bottom, then slide to the right. That's how you write a 2."
- ✦ Provide pencil and paper with large lines to encourage your child to practice writing the numerals. Lightly write it for him or her to trace at first. Then encourage him or her to form the numerals independently.
- ✦ Young children often benefit from "feeling the shape" of a numeral. Write the numerals on index cards and trace the numerals with glue. When they're dry, your child can trace their raised shapes to help him or her learn to write the numerals.
- ✦ Raise your child's understanding of what numerals represent by pointing them out when you see them in the real world. Note the numerals used to show the price of gasoline at the gas station or the price signs in the produce section of the grocery store. Point out numerals on billboards or other large signs you see from the car or on the cash register as you pay for items.

#### More questions to ask

As your child's knowledge increases, ask him or her questions about the value of each numeral. For example, "Yes, those are 4s. Is a 4 bigger or smaller than the 6s you just found?"

#### What your child is practicing

It takes lots of practice to remember the numbers and their names. It is natural for your child to remember some of them more quickly than others. Celebrate the successes and help your child as he or she learns the other numbers.