

Cover Up—One to One Correspondence

What the Research Says

- During the preschool years (ages 3-5 years), children build basic understanding of numbers or amounts through their actions with real objects.
- In order to count well, children need to: 1) know the sequence of the numbers, 2) be able to count aloud with one-to-one correspondence, and 3) understand that the last number counted tells how many in a group.
- **One-to-one correspondence** is the process of touching one object for each number counted aloud.
- **Rote counting** is the naming of the number words in the correct sequence (saying: 1,2,3,4,...).
- Although rote counting is important, children learn more about counting and numbers if they count aloud with objects 1:1 (touching an object for every number they say aloud).
- One-to-one correspondence is necessary before children can carry out higher-level math operations.
- Helping children link their understanding of numbers with specific objects, prepares them to begin working with larger quantities.

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Activities for Families

- Use counting and one-to-one correspondence with young children during daily routines. For example, talk about how each foot needs one sock when dressing in the morning. At dinnertime, discuss with your child how many plates are needed to set the table (one plate per family member).
- Draw your child's attention to, and talk about number concepts in relation to familiar objects around your house and neighborhood (for example, how many wheels are on a car compared to a bicycle).
- Sing songs, recite rhymes and read books about numbers to expose young children to numerals, counting, and number concepts. Children love to hear the same books, rhymes and songs over and over. Good examples of books and songs include: "Three Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed", "One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish", "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe", and "The Ants Go Marching One by One."
- Play age appropriate board games that use spinners or dice to allow for one-to-one counting.
- Use boxes or other containers (fishing tackle boxes, jewelry boxes) to sort and organize toys, craft supplies, and so on to practice one-to-one counting.
- Have fun dropping and counting (one-to-one correspondence) objects into containers (pennies into a bank, plastic bottles into a recycling bin, blocks into a toy box).

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Advice for Families

- You can help your child learn about numbers by modeling counting (1:1 with objects) and asking him/her to count objects with you.
- You can help your child learn about numbers by using quantity words (more, less, smaller, bigger) when talking about amounts.
- Number flashcards may be used if your child is interested in the printed symbol for a number, but children will learn more about number concepts by engaging in 1:1 counting with real objects.
- Look for ways to bring numbers and counting into your daily conversations (shopping for groceries, playing games, exploring nature, getting dressed, eating and preparing food). Opportunities to talk about numbers are all around you!
- Encourage and recognize accomplishments in 1:1 counting and mathematical thinking. This will help your child understand how much you value learning.