

Snack Time—Number Sense and Counting

What the Research Says

- In order to count well, young children need to: 1) know the sequence of the numbers (1,2,3...), 2) be able to count aloud with one-to-one correspondence, and 3) understand that the last number counted tells how many objects are in a group.
- **Rote counting** is the naming of the number words in the correct sequence (saying: 1,2,3,4,...).
- **One-to-one correspondence** is the process of touching one object for each number counted aloud.
- Although rote counting is important, children learn far more about counting and numbers if they count aloud *AND* use one to one correspondence (touching an object for every number they say aloud).
- Helping children to “count-on” by adding items to groups of objects prepares for developing addition and subtraction skills. (For example, If your child counts 3 crackers, provide more crackers and encourage your child to “count on” – 4, 5, 6, etc. instead of starting over with 1.)
- By counting small groups of objects, young children learn that the last number in the sequence represents the total quantity of objects.
- Young children learn early mathematical concepts during play and daily routines like snack and mealtime.
- Drawing children’s attention to mathematical concepts like quantity during snack time “mathematizes” this daily routine in ways that are very meaningful and purposeful to the child (For example, How many pieces of bread do we need to make a sandwich?).