

## Getting Ready for Kindergarten: Numbers Count!

Children start developing math skills as they explore their world and play with real objects. Families can support children's mathematical learning by counting things together and talking about quantities. Enjoy exploring numbers during everyday routines and experiences!

### Exploring numbers supports the following Lincoln County Schools kindergarten readiness skills:

- I can use words like: more, less, and none when comparing groups of objects.
- I can count to 20.
- I can identify written numbers from 0-10.
- I can count 10 objects.

### Let's talk about counting.

Help your child feel comfortable and confident about counting. Focus on small amounts at first (up to five objects) and provide lots of support. Try the steps below to help guide your child.

- Start by giving your child lots of opportunities to see and hear you count.
- Encourage your child to touch or handle objects as you count them.
- Invite your child to count along with you. At first he/she may say numbers after you do. Continue to encourage your child to touch or handle each object as it's counted.
- Count things together, but pause before you say the next number, giving your child a chance to say the number first.
- Invite your child to count small groups of objects independently. Gradually increase the number of objects as your child's skills grow!

#### **What about mistakes?**

Children will often skip a number or miss an object when they're learning to count. It's important to keep things positive – you're playing with numbers together, not giving a test.

If your child makes a mistake, trying saying something like "Hmmm, I'm not sure we got everything. Let's try again together". Then help your child count and touch each object. If your child gets frustrated, try a different or simpler activity or wait for another time to do more counting.

### Make counting part of your child's day. For example...

#### **When Playing with Toys**

- Count blocks as your child builds.
- Make homes for toy animals and count the animals in each home.
- Count toy cars as your child drives them into a pretend parking lot or garage.
- Use boxes or blankets as toy beds. Help your child count dolls or stuffed animals to see how many beds are needed. Count again as each doll/animal is put in bed.

#### **During Daily Routines**

- Count buttons, pockets, or designs on your child's clothes while getting dressed.
- Count plates when setting the table. Count again as napkins or cups are added.
- Count socks, shirts or towels as you fold laundry together.
- As you're cleaning up, ask your child to find and count a certain number of things to put away. For instance: "Can you find three books to put on the shelf?"

#### **When Exploring Outdoors**

- Count steps as you go up stairs or as your child climbs up playground equipment.
- Collect and count leaves, shells, rocks or pine cones.
- Let your child toss balls or beanbags towards a bag or basket. Count how many land inside and how many outside.
- Have your child choose how many times to do an action like hopping or jumping jacks. Count as you do the action together.

### Help your child recognize written numbers.

- Talk about the numbers you see around you.  
"Look – there's a number 5 on the tag in your shirt. You wear a size 5."  
"I see a number 3 on your red car. Do you see any other numbers on your cars?"

“Wow, look at all the numbers on our grocery receipt. I see a number 2 – lets see if there are any more 2s.”

- Get 10 blank index cards or small pieces of paper. Create pairs of cards for the numbers 1 – 5. Use the cards for the following games. Talk about the names of the numbers as you play.
  - Spread one set of number cards (1-5) face up on the table. Put the other set face down in a pile. Take turns drawing a card from the pile and matching it to a number on the table.
  - Mix both sets of cards together. Spread them face down on the table. Take turns turning over two cards. If the cards match, leave them face up. If they don't match, turn them back over. Keep going until all the cards are face up.
  - Let your child pick a card. Talk about the number on the card and invite your child to look around the house for that number.

*When your child recognizes the numbers 1 – 5, try adding cards for the numbers 6 – 10.*

- Look for number and counting books at the library or bookstore. Explore the books together, counting items and talking about the numbers on each page.
- Make a number book with your child. Staple pieces of paper together. Write one number (1-10) on each page. Tell your child the name of each number as you write. Give your child one sticker to put on the 1 page, two stickers to put on the 2 page, three stickers to put on the 3 page, etc. You can use the same process to make a number poster to put up where your child can look at each day.

### Help your child notice and compare amounts. You can say things like...

“It looks like you used more blue blocks than red blocks in your building.”

“You have four crackers left and I have two. You have more crackers left than I do.”

“There are five big shells and three little shells. Three is less than five.”

We had a bunch of rocks in our bucket and then dumped them all out. Now there are none!

