

Math at Home Counting Activities for Grades K-2

Below are math activities to do at home related to counting. They provide an opportunity for you to engage in problem-solving with your child, using familiar contexts and materials found at home. Suggested grade levels are indicated for each activity, but students vary widely in what they find engaging and challenging.

While you work with your child, show curiosity about their ideas. Let them take the lead. Ask questions like “*What do you notice?*”, “*Why do you think that?*”, “*How did you figure that out?*”, and “*What do you think we should do next?*” Encourage your child to come up with new questions to ask in order to extend the activity.

Kindergarten Activities

Counting Take advantage of any opportunities to count with your child. Children learn to count accurately by having many opportunities to see and hear other people count and to count on their own. You can model this by:

- Counting out napkins or plates for the table
- Counting the number of stairs as you go up or down
- Counting the number of a particular object (e.g., dogs, signs, or cars) as you walk down the street
- Counting the number of items in a collection of plastic animals, cars, or other small toys

Grab and Count Gather a set of objects, such as toy cars, blocks, or foam peanuts. Ask your child to grab a handful and count how many they grabbed. Then, ask your child to predict whether you will be able to grab more or less. Try it and find out. Your child can also grab two handfuls and see which holds more, the left hand or the right.

Counting in Different Ways You can help your child learn to count fluently by finding opportunities count in different ways. For example, sometimes count aloud together and see how high you can count. At other times, ask your child to count a set of objects (“*How many books are on the table?*”) or the number of pictures on a page. A slightly different kind of question is “*Can you make a group of 10 blocks?*” or “*Can you count out 12 pennies?*” You can also ask your child to

count to solve a problem; for example, *“If everyone needs a fork, how many forks do we need to set the table?”*

Compare You will need a deck of playing cards with the face cards removed. This game is similar to the familiar card game, War. Each player gets half of a deck of cards and puts them in a pile facedown. Both players turn over their top card, and the person with the greater number says, *“Me”* and takes the cards. Ask your child to explain how he or she knows which number is greater. The game is over when all of the cards have been turned over. You can also play this game online: [Compare](#)

One More or Less Find opportunities to ask your child about one more and one less, when counting things at home. For example, after your child counts a set of objects such as pennies, ask, *“What if I gave you one more penny? Then how many would you have?”* or *“What if I took one penny back? Then how many would you have?”* Then, add (or remove) a penny and ask your child to recount the set from one to determine or to double-check the answer.



How many crayons? What’s 1 more? What’s 1 fewer?

The Counting Sequence You can practice the counting sequence with larger numbers with your child. For example, you could ask your child start at 40 and count to 55. Find opportunities to count aloud together, letting your child pick the starting and ending numbers. You can also practice counting backwards or counting together by 10s to 100.

Grade 1 Activities

Counting Your child can count collections of objects. With your child, count sets of objects around the house such as silverware, pennies, or collections of cars or animals. You can also look in books, magazines, or online for pictures that your child can count. Your child can also practice the rote counting sequence. Begin counting at 1 and take turns saying each number. See how high you can count together. Also practice counting backward. Start at 20 and count back to 1; gradually choose larger numbers.

Start With/Get To Ask your child to select a number to “Start With” and another number to “Get To.” Count with your child from the “Start With” number to the “Get To” number. Focus on numbers 1–120. Your child can write the numbers they are counting as an extension of this activity. You can also challenge your child to write the numbers in order as high as they can count.

Organizing Objects into Groups of Ten Ask your child to count a set of objects by putting them into groups of 10 and then figuring out the total number. Or have them first count the set by 1s and then ask, “*You have 48 pennies. Suppose you put them in groups of 10. How many groups of 10 would you have? How many leftovers?*”

Counting by Tens You and your child can count by 10s together, forward and back, to practice the sequence of numbers. You can also find ways to represent that count: for example, “*There are 5 of us having dinner tonight. How many fingers are there? How could we figure that out?*” After finding the total number of fingers, you can ask questions such as, “*What if one person got up from the table? What if one more person joined us? How many fingers would there be? How do you know?*”



How many kids? How many hands? How many fingers?

Grade 2 Activities

Counting by Groups Look for opportunities to practice counting by 2s, 5s, and 10s with your child. Count together and see how high you can go. Think about situations that involve equal groups. Pose questions such as “*If you have 8 pairs of socks, how many socks do you have?*”

Skip Counting Look for opportunities to practice skip counting by 2s, 5s, and 10s. Count together and see how high you can go. You can help your child see everyday examples of this skill by counting items such as shoes, fingers, or feet.

Pose questions about situations that involve equal groups. For example: *“When we are with the whole family, how many fingers are there?”*

Drawing Buildings Using your home or a familiar building, your child can count the number of rooms on 1 floor. Draw this floor and label what the different rooms are. Then ask questions such as, *“If there are 2 floors in this building that have the same number of rooms, how many rooms would there be?”* *“How many rooms would there be on 3 floors?”*

Making Buildings Use building blocks or Legos to make a building. Make the first floor of the building using one block to represent each room. Discuss how many rooms there are and what the different rooms could be. Use the same number of blocks to make a second floor that is exactly the same size and shape as the first. Make the building higher by adding floors. Each floor should have the same number of rooms. As you add each floor, count the total number of rooms in the building. Write down the total number of rooms for 1 floor, 2 floors, 3 floors, and so on. Ask, *“What do you notice about how the total number of rooms changes?”*

Animal Legs Choose an animal that your child likes (e.g., cats), and make a table about the number of cats and their legs. Start with 1 cat and fill in how many legs 1 cat has. Then add another cat and fill in the total number of legs that 2 cats have. Continue the table and discuss the pattern that emerges. See whether your child can determine the total number of legs each time a cat is added.

Cats	Legs
1	4
2	8
3	12
4	?