Count Me In!
Learning about Numbers

Math helps your child make sense of the world. Sharing ideas about numbers as part of your everyday routine will help your child build understanding about quantity, counting, and what numbers mean. At this stage, learning about math is not about always getting right answers, but understanding math concepts and the problems math can solve.

- It's natural to bring numbers into your conversation with your child: *You have two beautiful eyes!*

- When you talk about numbers, use your home language. Speak to your child in the language you know best and feel most comfortable using.

- Let your child see you use math when you shop, cook, decorate your home, count money, or pay bills.

- Encourage your child to count with you. Make counting aloud part of your clean-up routine as toys are put into a bin, count the number of apples you buy at the store, count the number of stairs you climb, or count the number of goodnight kisses given at bedtime. Don't worry or correct if she skips a number.

- Show your child numbers wherever you find them: on the clock, on his clothes, in books, or on food packages. On the highway, notice or count exit numbers.

- Do finger plays or rhymes with numbers in them, such as *I Have Ten Little Fingers* or *One, Two, Buckle My Shoe*.

- Help your child to understand the meaning of numbers. Point out lots of different examples of a number, such as two feet, two socks, and two shoes.

- Cook together using a recipe. As you read it aloud, point out the ingredients and amounts needed. Give your child specific jobs like gathering ingredients: *We need two onions.* Count them together when she brings them to you.

- Ask your older toddler to help set the table: *Here are four spoons. One, two, three, four. Please put a spoon at each place so everyone has one.*

- Count things of interest to your child or things he's learning to recognize: *You have lots of toy cars! I wonder how many you have. Let's count them.* Or: *Look at this sign. I see a letter "M," just like in Max. How many of the letter M do you see? Let's count!*

- Match and count pairs together, like socks, gloves, or mittens: *One red sock, two red socks. That's a match!*

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