

Let's Count!

Darell Nursery's top tips for number

When your child is counting, repeat with them to **ensure they count in the right order**, 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. and clap the beat to help their fluency – up to 10 and back again is good.

Count a lot! Count out items around the house – food (fruit and vegetables), washing (socks and pants), buttons on clothing, shoes by the door, stairs up and down, steps from one room to another, dinosaurs and cars, dolls and bears.

Make sure you **model touching items as you count** so that children associate a number name with a quantity.

Begin to **compare groups of items** that your child is interested in. For example, the apples and the bananas, cars and dinosaurs, dolls and bears. Start by asking, *'Which is more?'* and make sure your child is secure with this concept before moving onto *'less'*. Be sure to include examples of two groups having *'the same'* too!

When comparing two groups, talk about how many items there are **'altogether'** to help your child begin to understand **'total'**. As your child becomes more secure with number they will begin to **mentally** count items in a group and tell you the total rather than count the objects out loud each time.

Have fun singing number rhymes – there are a lot! Go to:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/schoolradio/subjects/earlylearning/nurserysongs>

Encourage your child to **use their fingers to show you different amounts**. Start with up to 5 then increase to 6, 7 etc. once they are secure.

'Show me 2 fingers ... show me 3'

Ask them to show you **'a different 4'**; for example, if they used 4 fingers on one hand the first time, they could use 2 fingers on each hand or 3 fingers on one hand and 1 on the other. This is helping them develop their understanding of number bonds.

Once your child is secure with counting out groups of objects and comparing, they are ready to begin to add and take away. Start by adding 1 more at a time to a group of objects, say cars, dinosaurs, animals. Just go up to 3, then 5 then on up to 10, moving on only when your child is secure at each level:

'How many have you got, altogether?' '3'

'What if we add one more. How many have you got now?' '4'

'That's right, because 4 is one more than 3'

This is very effective if you divide the objects into two groups, one for you and one for your child, so that they see as one group increases the other decreases:

'Who has more, me or you?' 'Me'

'Why?'

'That's right, because you added one more to your group and 4 is more than 3'

'Who has less now?' 'You'

'Why?'

'That's right, because you took one away from my group and 3 is less than 4'

AVOID SAYING 'NO' WHEN YOUR CHILD MAKES MISTAKES WITH NUMBER, INSTEAD ENCOURAGE THEM TO TRY AGAIN AND TURN THE MISTAKE INTO A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY *'were there 4? Let's check, that's right, there were 3, we needed one more to make 4'*