



## HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN

**What is number recognition?** Number recognition is the ability to tell *how many* objects are in a small set without counting them (given all the time they need to observe the group of objects). We distinguish this skill from subitizing (defined below) because children recognize how many are in a small set but may not do so quickly.

**What is subitizing?** Subitizing is the ability to tell how many objects are in a group *quickly* without counting them.

**Infants and toddlers** can recognize small groups of up to three objects. For example, children may say “one mommy,” “two cars,” or “three crackers.” **By three years old**, they may put their toys or objects into groups of up to three. This is called **perceptual subitizing**.

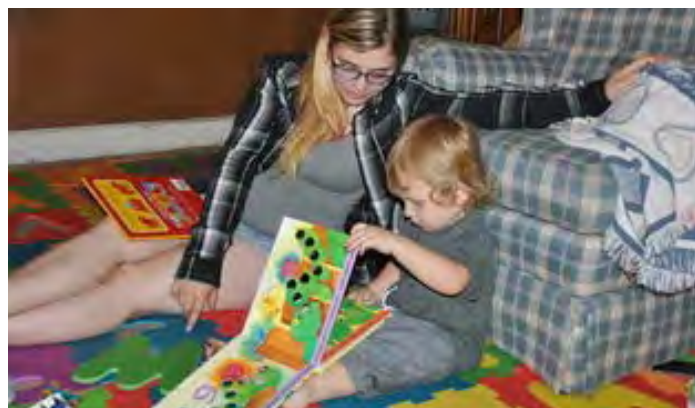
**Preschoolers**, after learning perceptual subitizing up to and beyond 4, can begin to see parts of multiple small sets of objects and can quickly put together the total number of objects without counting. For example, a child might say, “I knew there was 6 because I saw 4 here and 2 there.” This is called **conceptual subitizing**.

### HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN NUMBER RECOGNITION AND SUBITIZING?

Here are a few activities and words you can use to promote recognition of number and subitizing at home! Try them out.

#### 1. LABEL NUMBERS EVERYWHERE!

State the number of objects in a group whenever you can. This helps your child recognize the number of objects and eventually subitize.



#### 2. SING SONGS AND SAY NURSERY RHYMES THAT COUNT.

Emphasize the finger patterns for each number. When you sing or say a number, hold up that many fingers. This shows children how the spoken number matches with the number of fingers!

Example YouTube Video: 5 Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1cyFOW--Tw>)



3. USE SUBITIZING VOCABULARY.

<p><b>Eating a Meal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“You took <b>four</b> carrots!”</li> <li>“<b>How many</b> crackers do you <b>have left</b>?”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Getting Dressed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“<b>How many</b> buttons?”</li> <li>“<b>Two</b> socks. <b>How many</b> shoes?”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Picking up Toys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Put those <b>two</b> cars in the box.”</li> <li>“<b>How many</b> square blocks do we have to put away.”</li> <li>“<b>Four</b> toy animals you had out, <b>one</b> cow <b>and three</b> horses.”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Driving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“<b>How many</b> bikes?”</li> <li>“Who can find <b>three</b> red cars?”</li> <li>“<b>Four</b> walkers!”</li> <li>“<b>Five</b> trucks! <b>Two</b> large <b>and three</b> small.”</li> </ul>

4. PLAY GAMES.

**FANTASTIC FIVE**

MATERIALS

- At least five containers that are not clear (e.g., bowls, cups, colored Tupperware)
- Counting objects that fit underneath the containers (e.g., beans; plastic colored beads).

INSTRUCTIONS

- Put groups of counting objects—less than six (or fewer, depending on the child’s age) under each container.
- Show the items to your child and tell them how many objects are in each pile.
- Hide the objects underneath the containers.
- Move the containers around to mix them up.
- Ask your child to find the container with the number you call out. For example, say, “Find the fantastic five” (or any number, such as wonderful one, tricky two, thrilling three, or fun four) and have your child pick one of the containers.
- Once your child chooses a container, reveal the objects. Then ask them, “How many [objects] do you see?” If they are unsure, tell them.
- If they guess correctly, say “There’s the fantastic five! You got it!” If they guess incorrectly, see if they can name the correct number in the container. Confirm, “That container has two, we are looking for five! Let’s try again!”
- Repeat as their interest allows.
- Also, have children mix up the containers and have you try to find a number.



**BOARD GAMES WITH DIE**

Play any racing-type board games you have at home with a regular 1 to 6 die, or use a toy cube and put just 1, 2, and 3 dots on all the faces. Help your child just name the number of dots quickly, without counting! For infants and toddlers, dice would need to meet safety standards or find an alternative solution such as putting large dots on a shoebox!

