



How Numbers Work

Place Value Basics

Beginner: Count objects out loud.

[Tip]: “Let’s count these apple slices, 1, 2, 3! You have 3 apple slices.”

Intermediate: Pick a number between 10 and 19 and write it down. Hold up all 10 of your fingers and ask your child to hold up the remaining digits. Show what number is made.

[Tip]: “I am holding up 10 fingers. This is 1 ten”, “Now you hold up 4 fingers. This is 4 ones”, “10 and 4 makes 14!” Count and check.

Experienced: Think of a number for your child to guess. Tell them how many tens and ones there are.

[Tip]: “Guess my number. I have 3 tens and 5 ones. 3 tens is 30, and 5 ones is 5. What is my number? Correct, it’s 35!”

Why is this important? Understanding place value helps children identify numbers in daily activities such as money, distance, and time.

References: Chan, W. W. L., Au, T. K., Lau, N. T. T., & Tang, J. (2017). Counting errors as a window onto children's place-value concept. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 51, 123–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2017.07.001>

Resources: [100 Chart](#), [10 Frame](#)