NUMBER CONCEPTS

The study of mathematics is about numbers and their relationships. It is more than just saying the numbers from 1 to 10. Children reflect their understanding of number concepts when they sort their toys, identify shapes and patterns, and correctly identify colors. Relationship words like over, under, more, less, and equal, along with positional words like first, second, third, next, and last are also indicators of mathematical understanding. Math concepts can be part of everyday activities.

Number Recognition and Counting

Counting and recognizing numbers and their quantities are skills young children develop. Say the number names as you count items with your child. Children learn concepts best when given an opportunity to have “hands-on” experiences. Encourage your child to practice counting and naming numbers when picking up toys, setting the table, or grocery shopping.

Counting Sets of Objects

Counting sets of objects uses the skill of one-to-one correspondence. One-to-one correspondence involves saying the number name series, beginning with 1, and pointing to a different object as each number name is spoken. Help your child look for sets of objects to count when you are reading, shopping, cooking, or playing.

How You Can Help Your Child at Home

1. Count everything, the number of steps from the car to the front door, the buttons on a coat, the food on your plate.

2. Make a number book. Write a number on each page, and let your child draw or glue on the correct number of items.

3. Identify numerals by pointing to the numbers and saying them as you dial the telephone. When your child is ready, let your child learn to dial a family member’s telephone number.
4. Keep a calendar where your child can see it. Count the days until a special event. Talk about the days when routine events occur.

5. Ask your child to help you match and count the pairs of socks when you do laundry. Very young children can help you sort the socks into piles according to who wears them.

6. Count sets of items needed to set a table (three forks, three napkins).

7. Count out sets of snacks for friends and family members; for example: “Let’s give everyone two cookies and four pretzels.”

8. Help your child look for sets of objects to count when you are reading, shopping, cooking, or playing.

9. Read counting books.