

License Plate Special

Grades 2-4

License plates can be used to reinforce children's understanding of the language of mathematics as well as their mathematical reasoning abilities.

What You Need

- * License plates
- * Paper
- * Crayons or markers
- * Ruler

What to Do

- * As you travel in a car or on a bus with your child, point out a license plate and read it to him using only number names (excluding the letters). For example, if the license plate is 663M218, read it as six hundred and sixty-three thousand two hundred and eighteen. Ask your child to find and read another license plate. Ask him if his number is less than, greater than or equal to yours.
- * Ask your older child to estimate the difference between his number and another license plate number. Is the difference less than 10, more than 100, more than 1,000?
- * Ask your child to write the names of the different states he sees on license plates (later he can check an atlas or dictionary for spellings—or you can help him use the abbreviations for each state). After the trip, ask him to tell you which state plates he saw most often. Which the least often? Help him to make a bar graph to show his findings.

It's important to help children to understand that numbers have the same value whether they are expressed in figures (1, 2, 3) or in words (one, two, three).