

Walk and Count

Preschool-Kindergarten

Ordinary activities can be used to reinforce young children's number sense and introduce them to arithmetic operations, such as addition and subtraction.

What to Do

* Take your child for a walk. You can walk around your neighborhood, through a park, or just around the rooms in your home. As you walk, say silly things for him to do, such as the following:

—Take two big steps and three little steps.

—Take three little steps, hop one time, take three big steps.

—Take one little step, turn around two times.

—Hop four times, turn around one time.

—Take three big steps forward and two big steps backward.

* Count aloud each kind of action that your child performs and compliment him for his efforts—"1, 2—1, 2, 3—1, 2. That's great!"

* Let your child turn the tables and say silly things for you to do as you walk.

* For your kindergarten child, expand the activity by asking him to "guess" (estimate) how many of his steps it will take, for example, to get from the tree to the corner. After he makes his estimate, have him count steps to see how close the estimate is. Next ask him how many of your steps it will take. Will it take you more steps or fewer to go the same distance? Again, have him count to see if his answers are correct.

Throughout the day, find ways to let children practice using arithmetic skills. Ask, for example, "How many magazines came in the mail?" "How many more letters will we need to get to have 10 letters?" "Which are there more of, magazines or letters?"