

# All About Counting

## What Is Counting?

Counting helps us answer the question “How many?” This includes things we can see and touch as well as things we can’t see, like days of the week. Counting also helps us compare things so we can figure out if there is more or less of something. This is important if I think you got more cookies than I did!

## Why Is Learning About Counting Important?

Counting is an important foundation in mathematics. Many math skills build on children’s ability to count. Counting is helpful for problem solving. We can count to find out how many things there are all together and how many are left when some things get taken away, and even to solve problems that involve simple multiplication or division.

## What Do Children Need to Know About Counting?

To count correctly, children need to be able to:

- Know and use number words in order (“One, two, three...”).
- Use each number word only once as they count each thing (a skill that is called one-to-one correspondence).
- Know that the last number word they say when they are done counting is how many things there are (“One, two, three, four. There are four doggies in the park!”).
- Know that it doesn’t matter in which order you count things, there will always be the same amount.

## How Can We Help Children Learn About Counting?

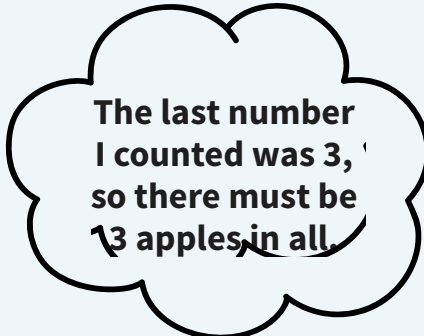
Children need a lot of opportunities to say the counting words and use them to count things. Thankfully, counting opportunities are all around us.

### Babies and Toddlers

- Count things (dogs, crackers, balls, family members).
- Count fingers and toes.
- Sing counting songs.

### Preschoolers and Older Children

- Count as they set the table (“I need one, two, three, four, five ... five forks!”).
- Count food items at the grocery store as you put them in the cart.
- Count soccer goals, jumps with a jump rope, basketball dunks, bubbles blown, steps on the stairs, books to check out from the library.
- Count how many days there are until Halloween.



**The last number I counted was 3, so there must be 3 apples in all.**

