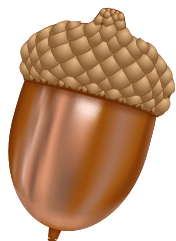


# Counting Up, Down, and All Around!

Understanding how much or how many is an important skill for young children to develop. Help your child learn about number quantities by exploring the mathematical world around you! Here are some ideas to get you started.

## How many are in my hand?

Find a bucket of small toys, rocks, acorns, or other tiny items. Take a handful and then have her look and guess how many pieces are in your hand. Count and check to see how close her guess is.



## Practice counting

Have a real or pretend tea party and make sure each guest gets one napkin, plate, cup, and spoon. Also, if you give everyone a cupcake, how many will you need?



## Count during everyday routines

Say, "I wonder how long it will take you to put your socks on." Then count aloud to model the number words (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.). Then ask your child to count how long it takes to put your socks on. Try counting numbers up to 20 (1-2-3-4, etc.) or counting down (10-9-8-7, etc.).



## Create collections of items

Count out groups of small objects such as pinecones, pebbles, or pennies. Label your collection with the numeral indicating the quantity. Count items into compartments of an egg carton or containers labeled with numbers.



## Notice numbers in nature

Sometimes we find things that have the same number of parts. A certain flower may always have six petals. Leaves may be attached in groups of three on trees. Dogs and cats have four legs. Some fruits, such as watermelon and apples, have many seeds. Other fruits, such as plums and apricots, have just one.



Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



13 Children's Research Center  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
51 Gerty Dr. • Champaign, IL 61820-7469  
Telephone: 217-333-1386  
Toll-free: 877-275-3227  
E-mail: [iel@illinois.edu](mailto:iel@illinois.edu)  
<https://illinoisearlylearning.org>

