



# Count, Group and Compare

## WHY?

Becoming good at math begins long before a child enters school. Even infants are wired to learn simple math ideas, including small numbers, patterns and making comparisons. You don't need to be a math teacher to start preparing your child to be a problem solver. There are fun and simple activities that you can do now to build math and thinking skills.

## Tips for Infants (Newborn – 12 months)

### Play Music

We all have a natural love of music. Share this love with your child. Play gentle music or sing when you are together. This is a fun and easy way to expose your child to rhythm and patterns. Lots of nursery rhymes and children's songs involve counting.

### Move in Rhythm

Clap, tap, rock or kiss your baby in a steady rhythm. Count while you do it. For example, while dressing your infant, tap their tummy three times. Repeat this. Have fun and make silly faces. This is a good way to teach your infant about counting.

### Count Objects

Count groups of things, starting with small numbers. For example, count your child's toes or pieces of fruit. Infants learn through all of their senses, so hold objects up for your child to see and touch. "Look, there's one... two bananas. Two bananas."

### Compare

Provide opportunities for your child to touch and explore things that are the same and different. For example, let your baby shake things that make different sounds, or touch fabrics with different textures. Talk about how they are similar or different.

## **Use Math Words**

When you talk to your infant, use words related to math ideas like quantities and comparisons. For example, words like “more, less, big, small, tall, short, round, square.” You don’t need to set aside special time to do this. You can use math words whenever you are with your child.

## **Compare Sizes**

Talk to your baby about things that are different sizes. For example, put their hat next to yours and say “Who wears the little hat? Aaron! Who wears the big hat? Mommy!”

## **Less and More**

As you go about your regular routine, find opportunities to compare amounts using “less” and “more.” For example, “Do you want more bananas? Now they are all gone!”

## **What’s Inside?**

Wrap an object in a piece of paper. See if your baby can remove the paper to find what’s inside. Talk about what they found and the crinkle sound the paper made.

## **Stack Towers**

Help your baby stack blocks or other objects like plastic cups. Describe what they are doing using size and position words. They will love knocking the tower over!

## **Fill Up and Dump Out**

Give your baby a container to scoop and dump water in the bathtub. Use words like “in” and “out,” “full” and “empty.”