

Number Cups



LEARNING DOMAIN:
Mathematics; Number & Operations

Learning to identify numbers and to count with one-to-one correspondence (that is, to say one number in correct order for each item) are important preschool skills that prepare children for other math activities. In this game, your child will use cereal or other small items to practice counting and matching to written numbers.

Materials

- 11 cups (plastic, styrofoam, or paper cups) with numbers 0–10 written on the side of the cup (one number on each cup).
- Marker or pen (that make visible numbers on the cups)
- Box or bowl of Cheerios™ or other small food or item of your choice (e.g., buttons, chips, pennies, paper clips, etc.). You will need at least 55 pieces to have enough for all the cups.

Let's Play!

Introduce the game to your child:

“Let’s play a game. We have 11 cups with numbers on them and lots of Cheerios (or other small food or item of your choice). I am going to say a number and we are going to count that many Cheerios to put in the cup.”

Then say a number from 0–10 and see if your child can find the cup with that number and count out that many Cheerios to put into that cup. Help your child count correctly if needed. Continue this game until you have done all the numbers.

Allow your child to eat or play with the items as you play the game!

Tips

- Make sure your child knows not to put non-food items into his/her mouth.
- For younger preschoolers, you might want to start with the #0 cup and proceed in order. For older preschoolers, you may be able to start with any number and continue in random order.
- For children who master this game, you can introduce the concepts of adding and subtracting: Ask the child “How many Cheerios do you think will be left if you eat one from this cup?” or “How many Cheerios will there be if we put one more Cheerio into this cup?” Have your child predict, then have him/her put one more in. Count to see if the answer was correct. Try it with the various numbered cups.

