

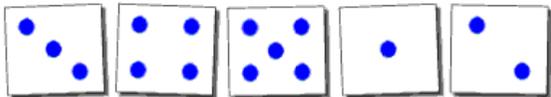
Skill 4

The number of objects is the same, however they are arranged.

Ordering Numbers

Make some cards with numbers on one side and the corresponding number of spots on the reverse.

Lay the cards out with the **spotted** sides upwards and ask your child to put them in order.



It is important that he or she can recognise the number of objects **however they are arranged**. Using the cards theme, you can represent some numbers with different patterns of spots. Ask your child to match the cards with the same number of spots. Take the opportunity also to arrange everyday items in different formations, for your child to count.

Estimating

Developing the ability to estimate is also a useful skill. Asking a child to guess how many items are on a tray will help to develop this. Always count them out together afterwards, so that the child can see how close he or she was.

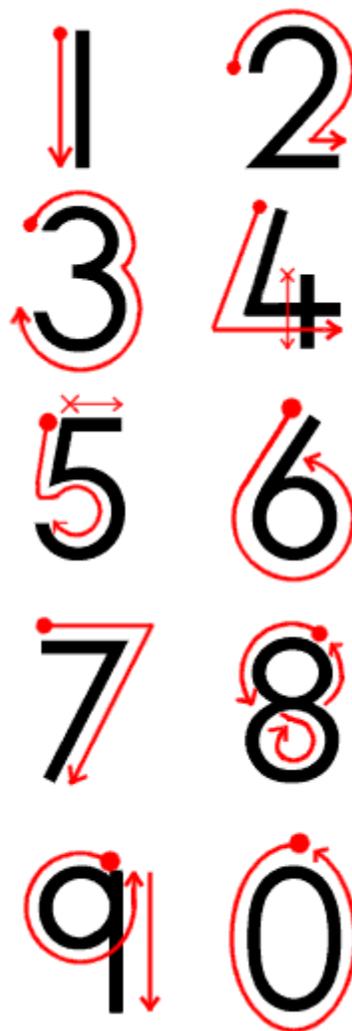
Recognising the Symbols

A fun way to help recognition of numbers is to select a few number cards. Take one from the pile without letting your child see it. Ask him or her to guess which one you have as you gradually expose the number from behind a screen, e.g. a book. If your child guesses wrongly, explain what the number is. Introduce a few numbers at first and build up slowly.

Number Formation Guide

Encourage your child to form numbers in the standard way. Bad habits are difficult to break, so following our simple guide can help to prevent problems at a later stage

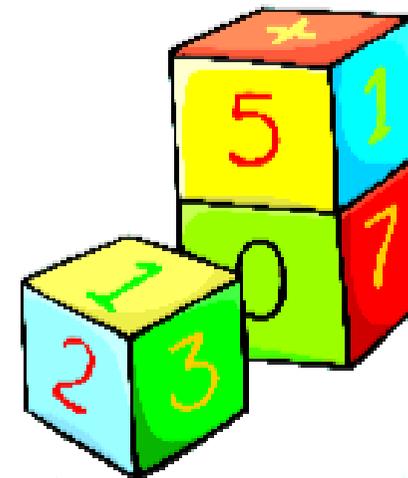
Spots indicate the starting position of the pencil. The pencil should remain on the paper, following the arrows. For the numbers four and five, the pencil must be raised before completing the second part of each number. **Crosses** indicate the second starting positions.



St John's Primary School and Nursery



Learning through Play



Promoting Partnership between home, school and the community

Introduction

Numbers can provide a lot of entertainment for small children. They first become aware of the sounds of numbers; then, they begin to understand what they mean. Finally, they need to recognise them when they are written down.

There are **four main skills** that children need to develop before they can count. Follow the links to see these explained and how you can help.

1. Recognition of the sounds of the numbers.
2. The understanding of one-to-one correspondence.
3. The understanding of "How many are there?".
4. The number of objects is the same however they are arranged.

The next stage is for your child to recognise numbers as symbols, which can be taught by playing number recognition games.

Once children recognise numbers, they will want to start writing them themselves. To help encourage them to form their numbers correctly, use our number formation guide (found at the back of this leaflet).

Skill 1

Children need to learn the sounds of the numbers 'one, two, three...'

Children can start to recognise the sound of numbers from an early age if they hear number songs and rhymes and hear people counting. Some examples of rhymes are:

Five currant buns in the baker's shop
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, once I caught a fish alive
Five fat sausages frying in a pan
1 potato, 2 potato, 3 potato, 4...

Books and stories that include numbers can help too. At story time, make a point of counting the characters and the key items in the pictures.

Some examples of books are:

Goldilocks and the Three Bears
The Three Billy Goats Gruff
The Very Hungry Caterpillar
The Three Little Pigs

These will give reinforcement to the sound of counting and, with it, the fact that numbers relate to different amounts. Children will then start to notice numbers in speech and begin to develop an understanding of how they are used.

The children may even be able to count by reciting the numbers from 1 to 10, but this has little meaning at this stage. It is a good idea to point out numbers that appear in everyday contexts such as on a clock, a telephone, on doors and money. This will help children to understand that numbers have a practical use, as well as helping them to recognise written numbers.

Skill 2

Before learning to count, a child needs to understand 'one-to-one correspondence'. This means being able to match one object to one other object or person.

You can practise 'one-to-one correspondence' in all sorts of different contexts. Laying the table is a good idea. Alternatively, you can do this in a play situation as indicated below:

Playdough Cakes

Make some playdough cakes and ask your child to give one to each of their soft toys. Use very small numbers at first.

Skill 3

Children need to understand what is meant by 'How many are there?'

Counting

As you count objects together, touch each one. This helps children to understand that they are counting one thing at a time. Also, only count up to three at first and do not progress until your child can do this successfully. Gradually add one more number at a time. Counting opportunities arise with everyday objects such as cutlery or biscuits. Ask your child to guess how many objects there are before counting them altogether. It is important to build confidence through positive comments.

Counting Game/Throwing games

Games which involve throwing a number of objects, such as rolled up socks, in a waste paper bin or cardboard box can give good counting practice.

Counting trays

Use paper plates for this activity. Write a number on the plate. Use objects such as bricks or spoons and show your child how to count the appropriate number on to each plate before he or she has a try.

Counting everyday objects

You will find many daily opportunities to count aloud together. Cooking is a wonderful way to introduce a child to practical maths and extend vocabulary. You can count baking cases, spoons of sugar or chocolate button decorations. You can even use the ingredients for simple addition and subtraction number sentences.