



RESPONDING TO COUNTING MISTAKES

MAKING TIME TO PRACTICE

Giving your child lots of practice time helps them become better counters. You can help your child practice with fun activities at home, like playing board games, using dice, or making a game out of counting things in your home together.

WHAT TYPES OF COUNTING GAMES SHOULD WE PLAY?

Racing games that involve rolling dice, counting dots on dominoes, spinning a number spinner, or drawing a number card and counting how many spaces to move. If a favorite family game has movement based on something other than a number (i.e., color cards in Candy Land) you could add dice or a number spinner to turn it into a counting opportunity.

Things you do every day at home, like cooking or cleaning, are also great ways to add counting practice into your child's day. For example, using a recipe, you and your child can count the number of things you are adding to the recipe. "We need three eggs in this recipe—help me count!"



COUNTING MISTAKES

It is okay and natural for children to make mistakes while learning to count. That's why counting practice is so important. And counting practice works best if you correct counting mistakes right when they happen. "Hmm, let's count again, I see one, two, three egg yolks in the bowl!"

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND WHEN MY CHILD MAKES A COUNTING MISTAKE?

IF YOUR CHILD:	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:	YOU CAN:
Skips or leaves out a number or counts in the wrong order	Your child is supposed to move 9 spaces in a game and counts, "1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9."	Let your child try to count the moves on the board by herself. If she misses a place, ask her to try again. Then count with her, using your finger to point to the spaces that go with the count. During other simple counting activities (like counting the number of socks in the laundry basket) help your child practice counting to the number they most often skip.
Skips something or counts something more than once	Your child is supposed to move 4 spaces in a game, but while sliding his piece along the board he says "2" and "3" while only moving over 1 space, so he ends up moving 3 spaces instead of 4.	Remind him that it's important to carefully and slowly count each jump to a new space. You can suggest that he pick up his piece and count the jumps while saying a number. Say them along with him to help.
Counts the starting space	Your child is supposed to move 2 spaces in a game but counts the space she is on as "1" and then only moves forward 1 space.	Have your child move her piece back to her starting space. Then say, "This is where you start. Zero! We count 1 when you move."
Keeps counting past the target number	Your child is supposed to move 4 spaces in a game but keeps counting and moving forward until you stop him.	Say something like, "Hmmm I think you moved your piece too far. Let's try again." Then help your child start over and recount. You might help by doing this with him until he has enough practice to do this alone.

WHERE CAN I GET OTHER IDEAS FOR SUPPORTING MY CHILD'S COUNTING SKILLS?

- Talk with your child's teacher or home visitor about other ideas to build simple counting into your daily routines and activities.
- If your child is in a group care setting, ask her teacher or family child care provider about the types of counting games they do at school and how to practice counting at home.