

## NUMBER SENSE

Number sense is the ability to recognize a *numeral* (the actual written symbol, such as 2, 8, or 10) and understand the quantity it represents. Thus, a child who has developed number sense with numbers from 1 to 5 can match one item with the numeral 1 and can count out five items to show a quantity of five and match it to the numeral 5.

(It's not necessary to use the word *numeral* when talking with your child. Just call them numbers.)

### Help your child learn to count.

The first encounters your child has with counting and numbers should be through playful activities. For instance, when you walk down steps with your child, count the steps together. It doesn't matter if your child does not join you in counting the steps right away. What matters is that counting is being modeled and that your child is learning about numbers in a playful way. Your child will eventually learn to count on his own.



## Help your child learn about money.

Children will learn to combine coins and count their total value in first grade. But first grade teachers are delighted when children come to school able to identify coins. If your child knows the value of coins, that's even better. Any help you can give at home is great.

Your child's first experiences with money should be through play. When your child is out of the stage where she puts small things in her mouth, you can begin to let her play with coins. Encourage your child to keep a "piggy bank." An empty coffee can will do fine. Decorate the can and cut a slot in the plastic lid to deposit coins. Help your child dump out the coins from time to time and sort them by types. Identify the coins by name: pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters. For example, say, "Here is the penny pile. Here is the nickel pile. We will put dimes in this pile. Look how many quarters we have!"

