



HELPING FAMILIES RESPOND TO COUNTING MISTAKES

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COUNTING

Encourage families to play board games with their child to help the child practice and improve their counting skills. Engaging in these games also supports child development in other domains, such as fine motor skills, expressive and receptive vocabulary, and social and emotional skills like turn-taking.



WHAT TYPES OF COUNTING GAMES?

- A racing game is an opportunity for counting practice. Whether you roll the dice or draw a number card, children can count how many spaces to move the game piece on the board.
- Families can use different options (dice, number spinner, number cards) with any game to adapt the difficulty or focus of math. They might try a spinner with numerals to help children learn their numerals. They may also use two dice or number cards with 2-digit numbers when children need more challenge.
- Share ways to build counting into everyday routines like cooking, sorting laundry, or other common family activities.

COUNTING MISTAKES

Help families recognize the counting mistakes

their child makes during board games or anytime they see their child count. Try to help parents answer the following questions about the child's mistake so parents know how to respond.

1. What was the key mistake?
2. Why do you think the child made the mistake?
3. How can you help the child avoid the mistake in the future?
 - If the child is making a counting mistake due to counting too fast, not paying attention, or acting silly, encourage the parent to have their child slow down and count slowly and carefully. They might also do something else for a bit (e.g., outdoor play or something physical if a child is antsy) and return to the counting activity at a time when the child is more focused.

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

IF YOUR CHILD	FOR EXAMPLE	YOU CAN
Omits a number or counts in the wrong order	The child is supposed to move 9 spaces and counts, "1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9."	Encourage parents to count 1-9 aloud with their child while the child moves the piece. Make sure parents let the child move his play piece on his own during his turn. In other contexts, encourage parents to challenge their child to count exactly 8 objects (or to the number they frequently omit).
Skips something or counts something more than once	The child is supposed to move 4 spaces, 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 parents that it's important for their child to carefully and slowly count each jump. They can encourage their child to pick up his piece and count the jumps while saying a number. Then have him count again from his starting space. Encourage parents to count along with him.
Counts the initial space	The child is supposed to move 2 spaces but counts the space she is on as "1" and then only moves forward 1 space.	Have parents help move their child's piece back to the starting space. Then say, "This is where you start. Zero! We count 1 when you move."
Keeps counting past the target number	The child is supposed to move 4 spaces but keeps counting and moving forward until you stop him.	Have parents move their child's piece back to the starting space and remind him of how many spaces he's supposed to move. Then ask him to move again. They can say something like, "Hmmm I think you moved your piece beyond the number of spaces on your card (dice, game piece). Let's try again."