



More About Math

Background for Leaders

This unit helps 4-5 year old children develop number sense by having them write numbers from 1-20, count objects in sets, and combine sets through early addition.



Write numbers from 1 to 20

At this age, children should have the opportunity to write numbers from 1 to 20 and associate these numbers with the quantity that they represent. When introducing this skill quantities should be shown in familiar arrangements such as dots on a domino or objects in a row. Children will readily make the connection between quantity and the number if presented with multiple opportunities to visualize the amount.

Counting Objects

Children at this age should understand, when counting, that the last number name tells the number of objects counted. As they count they should say the number names in the standard order, pairing each object with one and only one number name and each number name with one and only one object. Children at this age will be most comfortable counting starting at the number one. They should be able to count the total amount in a group in order to answer “how many?” questions when there are as many as 20 things arranged in a line, a rectangular array, or a circle, or as many as 10 things in a scattered configuration.

Comparing Groups

Young children should be able to identify whether the number of objects in one group is greater than, less than, or equal to the number of objects in another group. To accomplish this they may use visual estimation, especially if the objects are in a similar configuration, or they may count each group to compare amounts. Children at this age may not be familiar with $>$, $<$, or $=$ as formal mathematical symbols. As children compare amounts you may ask them to circle the larger group or smaller group and begin to introduce the mathematical symbols but it is not necessary for children to know these symbols at this point. Children at this age should be able to compare two numbers between 1 and 10 presented as written numerals, although they may need to count out objects to compare when first working on this skill.

Combining Sets

Once children have gotten comfortable counting numbers up to 10, they may begin combining the sets that they have counted (this is a precursor to learning to write number sentences with addition, subtraction, and equals signs). Children age 4-5 years old will be most comfortable adding sets that combine to make no more than 10. While children at this age do not need to write the addition sentence they can represent the situation with a picture or count out objects to show how many. The group leader may write the addition sentence under their representation to help make the connections for the child or children.