



# The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That!

## ACTIVITY

### EXPLORING NUMBERS AND COUNTING





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## Overview

Does your child like to tell people how old he is? Sometimes he may even show his age by holding up a finger for each year. Your child's age is one number he knows very well. For this reason, it is a great number to use in helping him understand what numbers are and the different ways in which you can represent them.

## The Math Idea

Learning to count is something kids learn very early in life. Counting concrete objects one by one, and assigning just one number to each object as you count—known as one-to-one correspondence—is a little harder for kids to grasp, but is an important skill to learn. Kids also need to understand that numbers can be represented in many ways—as a numeral, as a word, as a group of objects, and even as an age. Kids as young as preschool-age can be introduced to the concept of operations, which is addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

**Skills:** Numbers and counting

**Ages:** 3–6

## What to Do

- [How Many Ways Old Are You?](#)
- [Take It Further](#)

## Getting Ready

Ask your child to use his fingers to show you how old he is. For example, if he is seven years old, he may hold up five fingers on one hand and two on the other. Ask him to count his fingers one by one, saying, “I am 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 years old!” Then ask, “How many fingers did you hold up on one hand, and how many did you hold up on the other hand?” You are now introducing your child to the concept of addition, showing him that a number can be broken into two parts, in this case a “five” and a “two.”



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## How Many Ways Old Are You?

### What You Need

- Pennies or other small objects
- Dice
- Magazines
- Paper

### How to Do It

Tell your child that you are going to show him more ways, besides his fingers, to show his age. (The following activities continue using the age seven as an example, but you can substitute your child's age.)

1. Find seven objects of a particular color or shape. For example, seven square objects or seven red objects.
2. Look for the number seven on objects inside or outside the house (e.g. on a clock, in a newspaper or magazine, a license plate, a road sign, etc.)
3. Cut out seven objects from a magazine and paste them onto a piece of paper, and write the number seven next to them—both as a numeral and as a word.
4. Count out seven pennies or other small objects
5. Divide a group of pennies into two groups that add up to seven (e.g., one group of four and one group of three). Ask your child, “How many other ways can you divide the group of pennies?”
6. Roll a pair of dice and see how many times the two dice add up to seven.
7. Go through a deck of cards with your child, and see how many combinations of cards will add up to seven.
8. Ask your child, “Can you think of any other ways to show me your age?”



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## Take It Further

Ask your child how old he will be next year. How old will he be in another two years? How about in another three years? Help him figure this out by counting out the same number of pennies as his age. Then add a penny, add two pennies, and add three pennies. Each time you add a penny, ask your child to count the pennies.

## More Ways to Discover and Learn

### Look in a Book

*Quack and Count* by Keith Baker

*12 Ways to Get to 11* by Eve Merriam; illustrated by Bernie Karlin

### Related Game

Play the Do You See My Seahorse? game on PBS KIDS

(<http://pbskids.org/catinthehat/games/doyouseemyseahorse/index.html>)