

*the **A**wesome
Book
for **C**hildren*



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Note: pages with ✂ mark are interactive, they can be printed out and used to help you play

Dear Parents,

When you are a parent, your primary goal is to set up your child for a successful, bright future. This means to start educating them from an early age and introducing them to the world.

Typically, kids start learning from as early as they become 2 years old. From then onwards their learning capabilities keep on increasing and all their senses become active in the process. This is a good time to expose them to great learning activities and useful hobbies that can be adapted to become a great learner.

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”

– Benjamin Franklin

At X-bet Magnet, we know that being a parent may feel overwhelming sometimes. We decided to create this book to share some practical advice on how to teach children to spell, read, and count. We sincerely hope this guide will help you to be more creative with what seems as simple as an alphabetic set.

Why is it so important for a child to learn to spell and count from a young age?

Learning your child to spell and count from a young age does not only give them great advantage when they start going to school, they will also enjoy the following benefits:

- Reading to your child broadens their mindset.
- They learn to recognise words, numbers and letters from a very early stage, making it easy for them when they go to school.
- Communication skills will improve from a young age.
- When children go to school for the first time, they are often hesitant to try new things. When they are already familiar with numbers and words it won't strike them as a new learning curve and they will settle into learning about numbers and words much easier. This, in turn, will give them a head start to faster learning abilities.
- Early child care promotes emotional and social development. High-quality learning centres assist parents and develop programs that nurture trusting relationships with their peers, teachers, and parents. In order to learn these skills, the child needs to feel secure with their caregiver, parent or teacher. Together with the goals of the parents, teachers strive to give the children the emotional connections they need to succeed later in life.
- Children learn to take care of themselves and others. As children learn new tasks that enable them to take better care of

themselves and help others, they develop a sense of pride and self-worth. Teachers and parents should understand that giving children real responsibilities like setting a table or feeding the classroom pet gives them «real skills» they can use in everyday life.

- Early learning offers structure and fun. It's good for young children to be introduced to a structured environment that helps them make friends and play well with others. Providing structure doesn't mean teachers are constantly correcting children. Teachers, together with the help of parents or caregivers, patiently and consistently coach the children, encouraging appropriate behaviours and outcomes. Having thoughtful structure at an early learning centre is largely invisible to the children. It does, however, give them a framework of organized spaces and schedules that promote socializing and learning.
- Learning promotes cognitive and language skills. Between the ages of 3 and 5, a child's vocabulary grows from about 900 words to 2,500 words and sentences become more complex. Learning to read, write and count exposes children to a language-rich setting. Conversational games are encouraged, and teachers and parents should help to stretch language skills by asking thought-provoking questions. Activities like singing, talking about favourite animals and telling stories to other children all help propel language skills forward.

- Learning promotes math and reading skills. Children are curious and want the skills—such as math and reading—that parents and teachers find important. To prepare children for a formal learning environment, parents and teachers should offer a wide range of games and activities that promote pre-k matching and reading skills. These activities could consist of singing an alphabet song while following along in a picture book, this builds connections between the visual and the spoken word. Math skills are introduced by sorting games, counting games, and matching activities that are designed to grow a child’s understanding of numbers. Teachers are trained to make learning math as much fun as possible and put the learning in terms that the child enjoys and understands. For example, they might learn how to pay for candy at a store or how to dial a phone number.
- Learning encourages a child’s curiosity. To nurture a child’s curiosity, early learning uses the child’s own interests and ideas to create activities that foster curiosity. Even surprise events like finding a butterfly on the playground can be used as an exciting opportunity to learn and be curious. Preschool-aged children have highly active imaginations and use make-believe to learn and play. Teachers and parents should use the line between reality and make-believe to fuel engagement and curiosity. Other examples of using a child’s imagination for learning is the use of props for pretending. Items like costumes, household toys, and smaller versions of real-world items like cars, planes, and animals promote creative play.



So how do I make learning fun?

If your child does not find learning fun, you will have a huge amount of struggle to get them to learn something new. So, how do you actually make learning fun? The following methods have proven to work wonders over the years:

- **Get Them Moving** – No one likes to sit still all day long. You want to get moving, and so do your kids! Whether you let them use task cards to get some movement while doing academics or utilize brain breaks to give them two minutes of down time, make sure to offer plenty of opportunities for movement as one of the ways to make learning fun and engaging.
- **Break up the Lesson** – You can't have children listen to you lecture and expect them to stay engaged for an entire hour! Break up your lesson. Give an introduction, do an activity, talk a little, go back to the activity, and then finish up with a discussion at the end. Your break up wouldn't have to look exactly like that, but breaking up the lesson will definitely help!
- **Throw a Party** – This is something you're obviously not going to do every day, but why not aim for once a month? If you just finished that rock unit, have a rock party! You could make rock candy or create metamorphic and sedimentary rocks. With Pinterest at our fingertips, it's easier than ever to find a way to "party"!
- **Show a Video** – In today's world, our children are bombarded with video stimuli from the moment they wake up until the moment they go to sleep. As parents, we have to compete! So, show that short video clip on YouTube. Or create something to share yourself.
- **Incorporate Art** – In a world filled with craftivities, there's a way to turn many lessons into art lessons. Science and social studies often take a backseat, so why not incorporate an art or craft project into these content areas to make the learning more fun and meaningful for your children?
- **Give Choice** – Sometimes all children want is a little choice. Think about it...as an adult, do you like always being told what to do? Or would you rather have some say in the matter? I know I like being given choices.
- **Take Learning Outside** – If a lesson can be done outdoors, then move it outside! Sometimes even simply being outside can make the lesson more fun and engaging. Bonus points if there is a way to get creative and be outside!
- **Let Them Be Creative** – Let your child know that you're open to assignments being changed or modified if they approve it with you first. Oftentimes our children have better ideas than we do, so let them run those ideas past you. They may just put a creative twist on a lesson that you hadn't thought of. For a child, this "twist" will make the lesson more meaningful and fun – therefore making them more engaged!



How to encourage a child to keep learning

Motivating your child is one of the most important factors where childhood development is concerned. Remember that if they don't get enough encouragement, they won't have the desire to keep learning. You can encourage children to learn by making use of the following methods:

- When teaching your child a new skill, it is important to give your full attention to the matter at hand. If you are distracted, they will catch on very quickly and often imitate your action by not concentrating on the task.
- Through your own enthusiasm for learning, you are subconsciously encouraging your child to share the same enthusiasm. After all, two learning minds are better than one!
- One thing to take note of is to never focus on how your child is performing when learning but rather to focus on what they are learning. That way, no matter if your child is a slow or fast learner, passion will be the root of continuous progress.
- Once your child has achieved a positive result with a specific task, you need to celebrate! Praising them for their progress is a fantastic way of encouraging them to keep learning.
- Fill your child's world with reading. Take turns reading with your older child, or establish a family reading time when everyone reads their own book. Demonstrate how important reading is to you by filling your home with printed materials: novels, newspapers, even posters and placemats with words on them.
- Encourage them to express their opinion, talk about their feelings, and make choices. They can pick out a side dish to go with dinner and select their own extracurricular activities. Ask for their input on family decisions, and show that you value it.
- Show enthusiasm for your child's interests and encourage them to explore subjects that fascinate them. If they are a horse nut, offer them stories about riding or challenge them to find five facts about horses in the encyclopaedia.
- Provide them with play opportunities that support different kinds of learning styles — from listening and visual learning to sorting and sequencing. Supplies that encourage open-ended play, such as blocks, will develop your child's creative expression and problem-solving skills as they build. They need lots of unstructured play time to explore them.
- Point out the new things you learn with enthusiasm. Discuss the different ways you find new information, whether you're looking for gardening tips on the Internet or in a book.
- Ask about what they are learning in school, not about their grades or test scores. Have them teach you what they learned in school today — putting the lesson into their own words will help them retain what they learned.
- Help your children organize their school papers and assignments so they feel in control of their work. If their task seems too daunting, they will spend more time worrying than learning.



- Check in with them regularly to make sure they are not feeling overloaded.
- Focus on strengths, encouraging developing talents. Even if they didn't ace a math test, they may have written a good poem in English class. In addition to a workbook for math practice, give them a writing journal.
- Turn everyday events into learning opportunities. Encourage them to explore the world around them, asking questions and making connections.



Life Skills and Learning

Every parent wants the best for their children. We want to raise our kids right and be there for them. While we can't provide our kids with every skill imaginable, there are some essential life skills all parents should teach their kids. I'm not just talking about how to ride a bike, play a musical instrument or drive a stick shift. These essential life skills will help your child better cope in the world and grow into a responsible, respectful and valuable member of society. Let's have a look at some of the main life skills associated with learning:

- Teach kids to never stop reading and learning. The more you read and learn, the more you open your mind to a wide range of possibilities and know all sorts of things that make you smarter and wiser. Children should also know learning does not involve reading textbooks only. There are many ways to learn. Encourage your children to be open-minded and receptive to learning from life situations.
- Teach kids to play well with others. Today's world has become a global village. The value of teamwork and accepting others for their differences cannot be emphasized enough. Encourage children to team up and work with others toward common goals.
- Teach kids to resolve disagreements amicably. Disagreements are inevitable in life, especially in today's hyper-competitive, self-serving world. Children should practice keeping a level head in the face of confrontations and disagreements. Encourage them to breathe, weigh all sides of an issue and ask questions like "why" and "what if." That way they focus on the problem and not

the person, and it becomes easier to control dangerous emotions like anger and rage.

- Teach kids to let their voice be heard, but in the right way. Let kids know that you as a parent won't always be there to protect and defend them. Encourage them to stand up for themselves, speak what's on their mind boldly and respectfully, and lead the way when the situation calls for it. The ability to stand up for yourself to communicate effectively and to lead are some of the most valuable skills anyone can possess in the modern world. It should be learned early.
- Teach kids to apologize when they are wrong, and forgive when they are wronged. Children should know everyone makes mistakes, but forgiveness can heal the worst of mistakes. There is no shame in asking for forgiveness and in forgiving others. In fact, asking for forgiveness and forgiving others is a mark of true courage. Encourage kids to cultivate an attitude of forgiveness and move past hurts and wrongdoings.
- Teach kids to show unexpected kindness and help the less fortunate when they can. Showing unexpected kindness is not only a sweet thing to do, but also the easiest way to touch a life. Encourage kids to show kindness and lend a helping hand whenever they can. It will help them develop compassion and will help them understand the difference between wants and needs in life.



- Teach kids to remain positive and focus more on the brighter side of life. Life is not all sunshine and rainbows. It is also not all gloom and doom. Life is a mix of good and bad experiences. If you focus on the positive side of life more than the negative, life isn't so bad after all. Encourage kids to remain positive, count their blessings and extract joy and happiness from "little" things in life, like a beautiful sunset or wonderful family. Positivity and laughter can shield from the stress, pain and malice in the world.
- Teach kids to protect the environment and care for animals. Kids should know people only have this one planet to live on. We all, therefore, need to protect and care for it. That means caring for plants, animals and the natural environment all around us. Encourage kids to feed the birds, walk the dog and even water plants. That way they will become mindful and protective of the planet and all that is in it.
- Teach kids to brush, floss and keep neat. Cleanliness, they say, is next to godliness. Kids need to learn how to clean and floss from an early age. Encourage, and even reward, them for good hygiene behaviour and healthy living, including eating well and exercising regularly. When kids are clean, healthy and happy, everyone is happy.
- Teach kids to love unconditionally. Love is the greatest virtue of them all. Everything hinges on it. Without love everything crumbles. Teach kids to love themselves and others not for what they do, but for who they are.





LETTER GAMES



I Spy Words Game

1

Spy easy-to-spell words around you and ask your child to guess what it is. (For example, I Spy with my little eye, something beginning with the letter C.)

2

Once your child has guessed the correct word (for example, Cat) let them make use of magnetic letters to spell the word on the fridge.

This is a classic among young children and falls into the traditional I Spy game category.

OWL



Learning tip – Depending on your child's spelling skills or age, you might want to take note of the items around you and choose items that won't be too difficult to spell. When starting off the game, opt for easy words such as Hat, Sun, Pen etc.

Word families



Making use of letters that often go together, is a great way of helping children spell.

1

Write down a set of word families (for example _ap, _at) and stick it to the fridge.

2

Help your child to form word families by placing letters of the alphabet in front or at the back of the word family in order to form a word (for example Cap, Hat)



Learning tip

– Let your child place random letters in front of the word family and ask them if it is a valid word or a silly word that does not exist. This will help them differentiate between words that make sense and words that do not make sense at all.

Horizontal and Vertical Letters



1

On a piece of paper, draw a vertical line on the one half of the page and a horizontal line on the other half of the page.

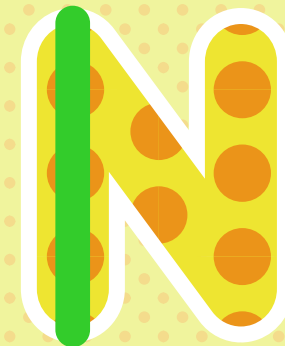
2

Ask your child to sort through the entire alphabet and find the letters which have vertical or horizontal lines.

3

The letters with vertical lines (for example N, M, R, T) can be added to the side of the page that has the vertical line drawn and the letters with horizontal lines (for example O, V, g) can be added to the other side.

Learning tip – To spice the game up a bit, you can add both upper and lowercase letters to the mix for an extra challenge.



Complete the Alphabet



1

Learning the alphabet from a young age is a perfect way to help your child spell. Place certain letters of the alphabet apart from the rest. (For example A, B, C _ _ F, G, _ ,I)

2

Ask your child to complete the alphabet by finding the missing letters and placing them in the correct spot.

Learning tip –

Let your child say the letters of the alphabet aloud as they complete the sequence.



It Begins With...

In this game, you can choose to either point to different objects around you or make use of printed images.

1

Point to objects around you or place printed images on the fridge and ask your child to tell you with which letter of the alphabet the image or object begins. (For example, place an image of a Pot on the fridge. Your child should then respond with the letter -P-).

2

Let your child find the letter P in the mix of alphabet letters and place it next to the image.

Learning tip – To increase the difficulty of the game, you can ask them to place both the upper- and lower-case letter next to the image or item you have pointed to.

Fridge Hangman



1

Place a section of a word on the fridge (for example H_ _ D). Choose 10 emojis (ranging from happy to sad) and place them on the fridge as well.

2

The more incorrect letters your child chooses, the sadder the emoji will get. (For example, if your child took 5 tries to get the entire word – HAND – correct, the emoji sticker or they will get as a reward will be (for example) astonished instead of super happy.



Another classic educational game to help improve spelling is Hangman... with a twist! Instead of making use of the traditional hangman image, why not make use of emoji images or stickers?

Learning tip – You can choose anything feature instead of the traditional hangman image (for example 10 cookies, 10 stars or 10 gummy bears.) You can also choose to give your child less or more tries, depending on their skill levels.

Rhyme Zone

1

Place a word (for example LOG) on the fridge.

2

Ask your child to find as many words as possible that rhyme with that word and place them on the fridge as well. (For example DOG, FOG)

*I often wish I were a KING,
And then I could do ANYTHING.*

king



Rhyming words give children an easier way to understand and read sentences.

Learning tip – Do not be bothered if your child makes a word that does not make sense. That is where you help them to understand the difference between silly words and words that make sense.

Guess the Letter/Word

1

Place a word on the fridge and ask your child to close their eyes.

2

Help them to trace the letters with their fingers and say the letter aloud when tracing over it.

3

Once they have traced all the letters of the word with their fingers, help them guess the word.

The more senses your child uses when learning, the easier it will be for them to understand. By making use of their hands and fingers, they learn to write the letters of the alphabet and form words with them.

Learning tip – You can even choose words (for example TEDDY) and give them a teddy to touch with closed eyes before they start tracing the letters of the word.

Dotted Letters/Words

Visualising letters or a word is yet another way for children to learn to read and write.



1

For this activity, you need to place a page with letters of the alphabet or even a complete word on the fridge.

2

Ensure these letters or word is only dotted and not completely written out in full lines.

3

Let your child search for the magnetic letters that resemble the dotted letter on the page to complete the word.

Learning tip – If your child is unsure about dotted letter images, let them trace the dots with their fingers to become familiar with the curves and edges of the letter. This will make it easier for them to find the correct letter among all the other magnetic letters.

Letters With Holes

1

To help your child recognise each letter of the alphabet without difficulty, place a page with a circle on one half of the page on the fridge.

2

Let your child find all the letters with holes or circles in them and place them on the side of the page with the circle on it. (For example a, b, d, B, O, P)

3

Those without circles should go on the other side of the page. (For example L, K, M, n, t, s).



Learning tip – Making use of both upper- and lower-case words will increase the difficulty level.

The Vowel Game



1

To help your child learn vowels, you can place words on the fridge that have only the vowels missing. (For example C_P).

2

Let your child make use of vowels (a, e, i, o, u) to form as many words as possible that make sense. (For example cap, cop, cup).

Learning tip – You can even help your child learn consonants by placing only one vowel on the fridge and asking them to place a consonant in front and at the back of the vowel to create words that makes sense.



Picture Spelling



1

Place a page on the fridge which features different items. (For example, a cup, a hat and a cat that is drawn over one another but that is still relatively easy to spot.)

2

Let your child find all the items in the image and place the words on the fridge.



Learning tip – Do not worry if your child spells the word wrong. This is where you come in to encourage them and help them find the correct letters to spell the word.

Word of the Day

1

Hide letters around the house and let your child find them.

2

When they find all of the ones you hid, place them all on the fridge.

3

Together, you can help them put the words of the day together.

popcorn



Learning tip – This is a great way of helping them spell, learn names and become familiar with every letter of the alphabet.

BINGO!

Sound Bingo



1

Place an empty bingo board with images on the fridge.

2

Pull a letter and have your child mark any picture that begins with that letter.

3

When you or your child gets five in a row, it's time to call Bingo!

Learning tip - If you want to challenge their phonic skills, announce the sound of the letter rather than the letter itself and play for a winner.



NUMBER GAMES



Count the Dots

1

To start this game, you need to place a paper with clusters of dots on the fridge.

2

Ask your child to count the dots and place the correct number alongside the image.

Learning tip

– If your child is just starting to learn to count, placing clusters of dots ranging from 1 to 5 would be the best option. As your child advances with counting, you can add more dots and even challenge them with dots ranging to 100!



Find the Number

1

Place a page with different numbers on the fridge and mix the numerical fridge magnets together in a separate bowl.

2

Ask your child to find the correct number and place it on the page.

Find it!

Learning tip – If they are just starting to recognise numbers, you can let them trace the number images on the page with their fingers and then use the same motion to search for the correct number in the bowl.

Guessing the Number

1

6

8

2



In order for children to make use of numbers to count, they would first need to know how to write them.

1

Place a number on the fridge and ask your child to close their eyes.

2

Help them trace the number with their fingers and say the number as they trace.

3!

Learning tip – You can even make use of number sequences (for example 2, 4, 6, 8) so they can learn multiples while learning to write them.

Dice Numbers

1

For this game, you would need a dice (as many as you like) as well as numerical fridge magnets. Let your child roll a dice or a pair of dice to find the number or sum of the numbers on the dice.

2

Let them place the correct number on the fridge according to the number the dice shows.

Learning tip – You make use of one dice and when your child throws (for example 6), let them place the numbers 1 to 6 in the correct order on the fridge.



Adding and Subtracting

1

Place two numbers on the fridge and ask your child to either add or subtract the two numbers from each other.

2

Help them to add or subtract by making use of household items such as macaroni or spoons.

3

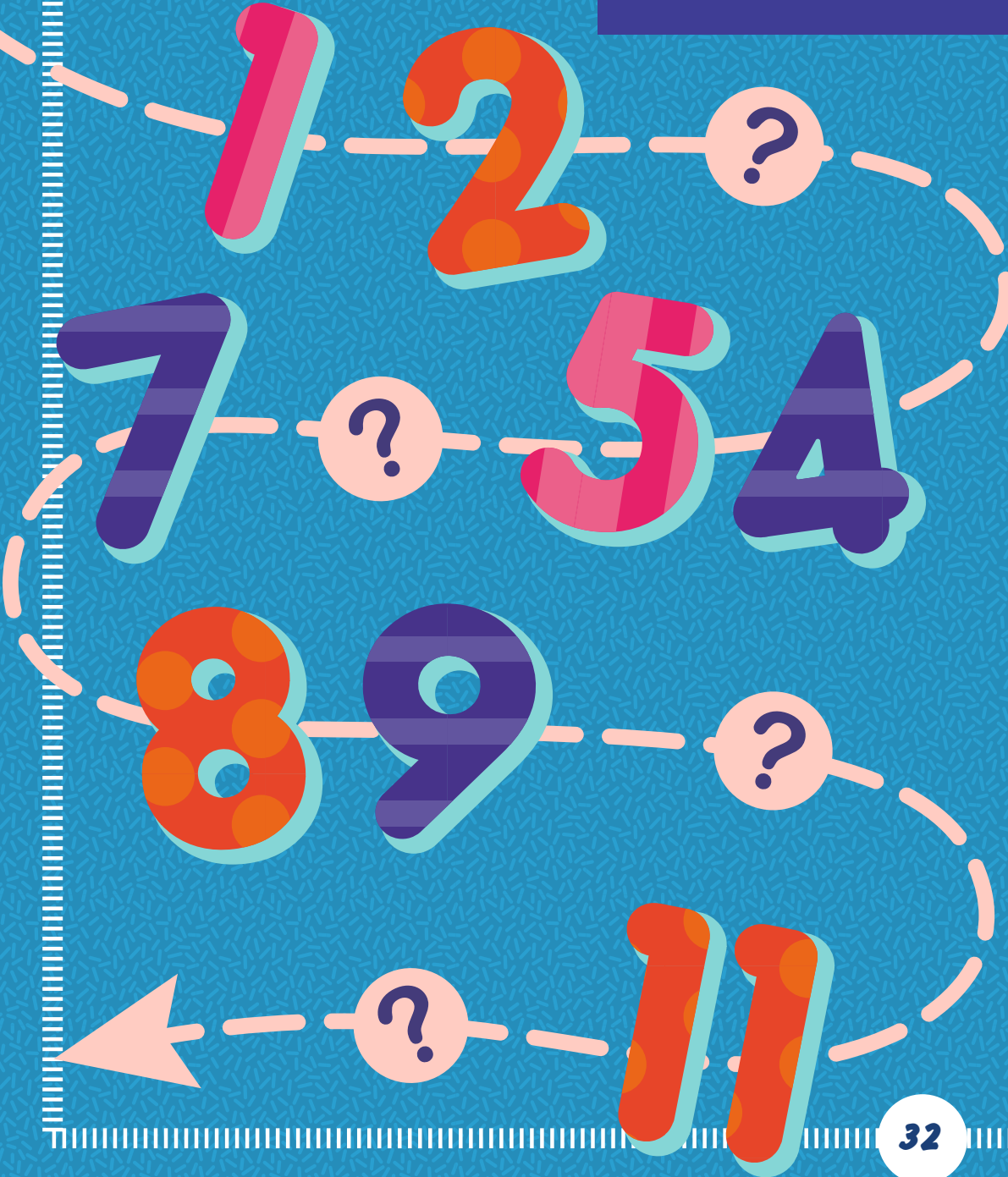
Let them place the correct answer next to the numbers on the fridge.

It's three!

Learning tip – For some children, adding and subtracting numbers might seem like a difficult learning curve to overcome. That is why you need to start with easy numbers (for example $2 + 3$). You can even paint the items you use for counting to make it a colourful activity!



Complete the Sequence



1

Once your child feels confident about writing and recognising numbers, you can step it up a notch by asking them to find number sequences.

2

Place certain numbers apart from the rest (for example 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12).

3

Ask your child to complete the number sequence by finding the missing numbers and placing them on the fridge.

Learning tip – This is a great way to help them with math tables such as x2, x4 etc.

Counting

1

Point to (for example the kitchen windows).

2

Ask your child to count them.

3

Let them place the correct number on the fridge.

Learning tip – You can place different images on the fridge (for example an image of spoons or a window) and ask them to find the correct number of spoons in the kitchen while they place the number next to the image.



Arms, Legs and Wheels



1



Place images of cars, trucks, insects and people on the fridge.

2

Let your child count the arms, legs or wheels on the images to find the correct number and place it on the fridge.

Learning tip – You can place any image on the fridge; be creative and make it fun!

Single and Double Digits

Learning tip - To better help them understand the difference between single and double digits, tell them a story. An easy way for a child to understand double and single digits is to make use of the rich and poor man story. The rich man (when looking at the number 43) will always count in tens (40) and the poor man in ones (3).

1

For the kids who are up for the math challenge, take the number (for example 43) and place it on the fridge.

2

Let your child find out how many tens (40) and how many ones (3) forms the complete number.



Silly Snakes

1

Place an image of a snake or worm on the fridge.

2

Let your child count from 1 and place as many numbers next to each other from one end to the other of the snake to the other.

3

The longer the snake, the more your child can count.



Learning tip – Instead of placing the image on the fridge, why not make a bigger snake of a room's length!



Even and Odd Numbers



1

To learn about even and odd numbers, ask your child to find all the even numbers and set them on one side of the fridge.

2

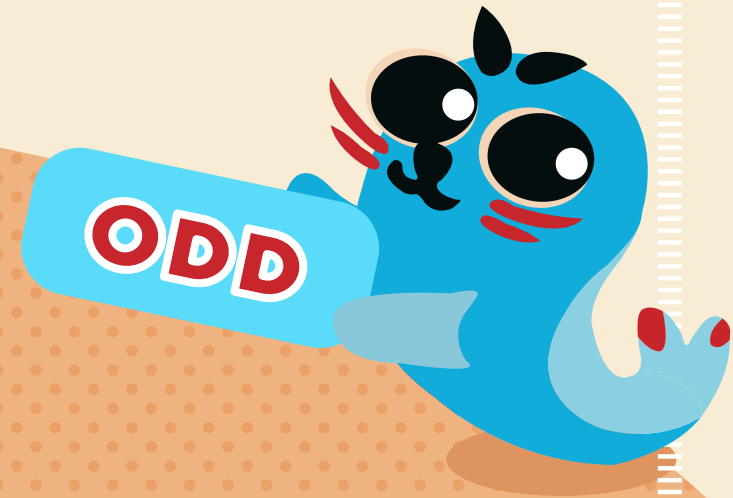
Help them place all the odd numbers on the other side.

Learning tip – You can even place images on the fridge (for example 5 shoes, 2 hens) and ask them to count the images and place the correct number next to it.



2

1



Simon Says

1

This fun game will help your child count as well as add an exercise twist!

2

Place a random number on the fridge and tap your tummy, rub your nose, do a jumping jack or whatever Simon Says gesture you like.

3

Your child should then repeat the action according to the number placed on the fridge.

3



Learning tip – For an extra bit of game spice, why not change the game rules so that whenever you place an even number on the fridge, they need to complete the Simon Says action according to that number. Whenever you place an uneven number on the fridge, they need to stand still without moving or they will lose the round. The possibilities with this game are endless!

Counting Sounds

1

For this game, you need to make use of a wooden spoon and pot to make sounds.

2

Ask your child to close their eyes and listen to the amount of times you tap on the pot with the spoon

3

Let them count the taps and place the correct number on the fridge.

Learning tip – You can even play out a simple tune on the pot or tap with your feet to provide them with a little challenge.



The Jelly Bean Count

1

Place a mix of coloured jelly beans in a container.

2

Ask your child the following questions and help them get the correct answers. How many beans show up red? How many beans show up white? How many beans in all?

3

Shake again and again to learn all the of counting.

Learning tip - Your child can also count the beans, make patterns and explore addition and subtraction.



Dear Reader,

We hope you can embark on a magical learning journey with your child by making use of all the fun games and activities in this book! Remember that a learning child is a happy child and should you share their passion for learning, you are creating the outlines of a bright future!

Thank you!