SUCCESS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS

Family Guide: Supporting Counting at Home

A comprehensive guide for families to support counting skills at home, covering key mathematical skills, practical activities, common challenges, and questions to deepen your child's thinking.

Why Counting Matters

Counting is the foundation of all math. It builds number sense and helps scholars become strong problem solvers by moving beyond simple memorization to understanding that a number represents a specific quantity (cardinality).

Key Skills We Are Building

- **One-to-One Correspondence**: Touching exactly one object for every one number said.
- **Cardinality**: Understanding that the last number said represents the total amount.
- **Accuracy and Double-Checking**: Ensuring the final count is correct through verification.
- **Writing Numbers**: Encouraging scholars to write down the number after they finish counting.

What to Watch For (Common "Stumble Points")

- **The "Tricky Teens"**: Many Kindergarteners and first graders struggle with sequences in the teens or jumping between decades (e.g., moving from 29 to 30).
- **Organization**: Watch if your scholar counts the same object twice. Help them stay organized by moving objects into a "counted" pile. Make sure they touch each object with their pointer finger as they count it.
- **Supporting Cardinality:** Scholars who are mastering number writing can often forget or mix up their total when they are writing it. Have students touch and count the objects twice. Then have them say their total, and identify what number they need to write. You can use a tool like a hundreds chart to support them.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

Activities to Try at Home

1. Create a "Counting Jar."

- **The Setup**: Use a clear cup or bowl and fill it with small household items, such as dried beans, buttons, pennies, or Lego bricks.
- **The Routine**:

1. **Estimate**: Ask your child to guess how many items are inside.
2. **Count**: Have them take items out and organize them into a line or a new pile as they count.
3. **Double-check:** Ask them to count again for accuracy.
4. **Match It (Equivalent Sets)**: Ask your child to find the same number of a different object (e.g., "You counted 12 beans. Can you find 12 spoons?").

2. Make it a Daily Habit

- **In the Kitchen**: Count silverware, crackers, grapes, or varieties of apples.
- **Around the House**: Count socks while folding laundry, buttons on clothes, or pennies in a jar.
- **Out and About**: Count stairs, trees on the block, parked cars, or people on the bus.
- **Daily Chores**: While setting the table, count the family members and determine the exact number of plates and forks needed.

3. Paper and Materials Practice

- **Baggies**: Use the materials baggies sent home from school and return them when you are ready for new items.
- **Drawing**: Draw shapes on a piece of paper, have your scholar count them, and have them write the number.
- **Fun Craft**: Make a "Cheerio Necklace" and count the Cheerios as you thread them.

Questions to Deepen Thinking

Instead of just asking for the final answer, use these questions to help your child think more deeply:

- "How do you know there are [number] items?"
- "How can you keep track of which ones you already counted?"
- "Can you show me how you double-checked your answer?"
- "What is a different way you could count these? (e.g., by 2s or grouping them)."
- “You counted 14 Cheerios. How many more Cheerios do you need to have 20?”