



FINGER PUPPETS YOU CAN COUNT ON!

Here's a playful way to help your child learn to recognize numbers and count from 1 to 10 ... and 10 to 1!

Materials:

package of peanuts in their shells
sharp scissors or knife
black marker
white poster paint (optional)

Directions:

1. Select 20 peanuts -- 10 for your fingers and 10 for your child's. Cut them in half at their "waistline." Carefully trim away the openings in the shells so the peanuts drop out. Make the openings large enough so the shell halves will fit over your child's fingertips. Make larger openings for your own. (Use the biggest halves for the thumbs.)
2. (Optional) Use the white poster paint to make a white background area on each half where you will write the numbers. Allow to dry.
3. Use the black marker to number the halves from 1 to 10, as shown. Make the numbers 1 and 10 on the halves you have selected for the thumbs.
4. Your finger puppets are ready for play! Some ideas for getting started: beginning with your left thumb, put on the number 1 half and invite your child to copy what you do. You might say something like: "I've put my number 1 on my thumb. Now it's your turn to put your number 1 on YOUR thumb!" When your child's puppet is on, you can use your puppet to say: "Hi, Number 1. Hey, you look just like I do!"
5. Working from the thumb across the fingers to the pinkie, continue putting on the number puppets one at a time in sequence, naming them by number as you go. Then the next time you do this, invite your child to tell you what number is next and to put that number on your finger for you.
6. Once all the puppets are placed on your fingers, make up number games together. For example, make fists to hide your numbers and invite your child to call them up one at a time, by name. Or both of you hold up the puppets in sequence as you count to 10.

Depending on your child's ability to count, you might pretend that you don't know which puppet comes next, and ask for help. Or you might put on your puppets out of sequence and ask for help putting them in order.

FINGER PUPPETS (continued)

Parent Pointers:

- Play of this kind will give your child experience with number recognition, sequencing numbers, and counting.
- When you first do this activity, you might want to invite your child to sit on your lap so that you both see the puppets from the same point of view.
- As your child becomes more experienced, try counting backwards from 10 to 1 using the same approaches suggested above.