

# Count by 5s Without Losing Your Marbles!

Back in kindergarten, your child probably spent lots of time counting things one by one, whether leaves, toes, or fingers. Now that first grade is here, though, your child will need to be able to count in groups, and especially by fives.

It's an important step in math, as kids move from concrete connections to more abstract ones. But that doesn't have to mean it stops being fun. Here's an activity you can do just about any day at home, using simple stuff to boost some newly complex thinking for your six year old.

## What You Need:

- 5 plastic cups
- Ink pen
- 1 plastic bowl and spoon
- Masking Tape
- 5 Ziploc bags
- 25 marbles (various colors- 5 of each color)
- 1 cup sand



## What to Do:

1. **Set the scene:** Invite your child on a math expedition- digging for marbles! Have your child prepare the bowl by placing all marbles in the bottom of the bowl and covering them with sand.
2. **Label cups.** Have your child write each marble group color on a piece of masking tape, and stick it on a different cup.
3. **Tell your child to use the spoon to dig** for marbles and sort them into the five labeled cups. Red marbles will go in the cup marked red, and so on.
4. **Count!** Does each cup have five marbles now? Great! Now count together aloud by fives, pointing to each cup as you say the number. Then have your child do it alone...and perhaps label each cup with a number as well: 5, 10, 15, 20.
5. **Save it for later.** With skills like this, it's hard to get enough practice. When your child has had enough, put the stuff in a Ziploc bag, label it and save it for another day. Pull it out anytime you've got a lull and your kid seems ready for more learning fun.

## Why it works:

Counting by fives marks an important jump from counting on fingers to counting in your head. From there, another exciting world beckons, as kids learn addition and subtraction facts. In a fun, down-home way, activities like "Digging for Marbles" reinforce this basic knowledge and provide an important foundation for success later on. Even if your kid doesn't thank you now, your first grade teacher will, once the tougher stuff kicks in!