

Make Milk Carton Counting Houses

Most five-year-olds master counting out loud long before they walk into kindergarten. This is always exciting to watch, but it doesn't mean that kids truly understand what numbers mean. Kindergarten teachers want to make sure that kids can count objects, but also connect groups of things to abstract numbers. This whimsical craft helps kids do just that, and reuses empty milk cartons to boot.

What You Need:

- Scissors
- Empty and washed 1 cup milk or juice cartons
- Tape or glue
- Colored construction paper
- Fine-line markers
- Ice cream sticks or craft sticks



What to Do:

1. Start by cutting off the tops of the cartons, leaving an open square top.
2. Using tape or glue, cover the cartons with construction paper. Leave the tops open.
3. With fine-line markers, draw windows and a door on each carton to make it resemble a house.
4. Write a different numeral on each door. If he is just beginning to work on this counting skill you may want to begin with lower numbers such as 1-5. If he is more advanced in his one to one correspondence skills begin with higher numbers, such as 8-15.
5. Give yourself and your child several of the craft sticks and decorate them with faces and hair to look like people (maybe even people you know or live in your own home!)
6. Line up the houses, and take turns putting the correct number of ice cream stick people in each house. The number written on the door should correspond with the number of people who live in the house.
7. Want to make a social studies connection? Try arranging the houses in two rows facing each other. Number the houses on the right with even numbers and the ones on the left with odd ... just like the houses on a real-life street!

This activity should be fun for just about any kindergartener, and your teacher will appreciate the curriculum reinforcement. If you've got a math fan, you can also try writing an addition or subtraction problem on each house door. Your child can place the number of ice cream stick people in the house that corresponds to the answer to each problem. When it comes to these fundamental concepts, there's really no such thing as too much practice!