Count & Stack

Category: Math | Ages: 3–4 | Time: 10 min | Prep: 2 min | Mess: None | Indoor

Why it matters

Many preschoolers can recite “one, two, three, four, five” from memory long before they connect each number word to a single physical object. Counting blocks one by one as they stack teaches that the last number spoken tells how many blocks are in the whole tower.

Materials checklist

- [ ] 10 wooden blocks, LEGO Duplo bricks, or plastic cups
- [ ] 5 small paper cards labeled 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

Substitutes: Use cereal boxes, thick books, or canned goods for stacking, and write numbers on sticky notes.

Step-by-step instructions

1. Spread the number cards face down on the rug and pile the blocks nearby.
2. Ask your child to flip over one card and name the number aloud.
3. Have your child pull that exact number of blocks from the pile, touching each block once as they count.
4. Stack the blocks into a tower right next to the number card.
5. Flip a second card, build a second tower, and place them side by side to compare which tower is taller.

What to say

- “Let’s touch each block with one finger as we count—one, two, three. Stop!”
- “Look at the 2-tower and the 5-tower. Which one has more blocks?”
- “If we put one more block on top of 3, how tall will it be now?”

Safety note: Use chunky blocks or plastic cups if children under age 3 are sharing the play space.

Notes & observations: