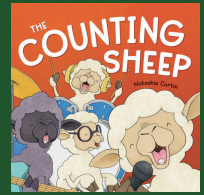


The Counting Sheep

Natashia Curtin



Counting together

Did you know that counting can be about much more than numbers? As you read, invite your child to count along with the sheep using their voice, fingers, or claps. You might say, "Let's count together... one, two, three!" We have found that adding movement, such as tapping knees or swaying to an imagined beat, helps children stay engaged. If your child loses interest, that's okay listening, watching, or joining in for just one number still supports early numeracy and language learning in a playful way.



Tell the story together

Invite your child to retell what happened using their own words. You can help by saying, "First they counted and then..." Joining ideas with the word "and" supports longer sentences, clearer storytelling, and confidence sharing ideas with others.

Developing curiosity

Keep the learning going by making your own counting band at home. Use pots, containers, and your hands to make sounds while counting together.

If instruments aren't available, try clapping, stomping, or humming instead.



Did you hear that rhyme?

Play with sounds from the story by finding words that rhyme or start with the same sound. You might ask, "What rhymes with sheep?" or "What else starts with sss?" Try stretching out the sounds together and repeating new words slowly. Silly or made-up answers are welcome. Noticing and playing with sounds in a playfully help children develop their awareness of letter sounds.

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Serve-Return-Rally-Learn

Reading a book together is an opportunity to Serve-Return-Rally with your child. Let's explore a possible Serve-Return-Rally from the book, *"The Counting Sheep."*



Serve

after reading *"all my life I have never been able to get to sleep at night, and then I end up sleeping all day."*

[adult] **"Why do you think the bilby ends up sleeping all day?"**



Return

[child] **"Cause it stays awake all night."**



Rally

[adult] **"I wonder what it does all night?"**

[child] **"I think he's looking for food."**

[adult] **"Animals that look for food at night, when we're sleeping, are called nocturnal animals. I wonder if there are any more nocturnal animals in the book."**

The more rallies you share, the more learning moments you create together.



Learn



Did you know?

Why questions can promote children's thinking and imagination. When you provide explanations, such as the meaning of nocturnal, it helps to expand your child's vocabulary and help them understand their world.