

Best start numeracy

A parent's guide

The Best Start Initiative provides schools with increased support for the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy among our youngest students.

It includes a new State-wide Kindergarten assessment that helps teachers identify the literacy and numeracy skills of each student at the beginning of Kindergarten.

Children start school often knowing a range of things about numbers. Best Start: Numeracy involves teachers interviewing students using a series of questions to identify a student's initial mathematical knowledge. The Best Start interview helps teachers develop effective learning programs to build upon what students currently know.

What do students do during the Best Start interview?

The interview is related to early number concepts and is designed to identify:

- How well students can count;
- Which numbers they can recognise;
- Whether they can correctly collect a small number of objects;
- Whether they can add and subtract small numbers of objects; and
- Whether they can recognise simple repeating patterns.

To determine how well a student can count the teacher may ask:

- 'Start counting from one and I'll tell you when to stop.'



By the end of Kindergarten students should be able to count to 30. This question helps teachers identify how well a student can count at the beginning of the year.

To determine which numbers students can identify, students could be shown a number and asked to identify it.

For example:

- 'Can you tell me what number this is?'

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To determine whether a student can correctly collect a small number of objects a teacher may place 12 pegs on the carpet and say:

- 'Please bring me six pegs.'

To determine whether a student can add small numbers a teacher may:

- Show three pegs to a student and then hide them;
- Show two more pegs to the student and then hide them; and then ask:

'How many pegs are there altogether?' (Correct answer: 5)

To determine whether a student can subtract small numbers a teacher may:

- Show 6 pegs to a student and say, 'I have 6 pegs' before covering them;
- The teacher then tells the student 'If I take away two pegs' (removes two pegs and keeps them covered) and then asks the student: 'How many pegs are left under here?' (Correct answer: 4)

To determine whether a student can recognise simple repeating patterns a teacher may:

- Put out two red pegs, two yellow pegs, two red pegs in a line and ask the student to make what would come next.

It's important to remember that all children learn at different rates. Don't be concerned if your child can't answer all of these questions, the Best Start interview is designed to provide teachers with information on each student's abilities so they can plan effective learning programs during the early years of school.