

# Add It Up



Here's an easy way to think about introducing addition: **group like things together, then add them up.** (Say, "Let's put all your red blocks in one pile and your blue ones in another. Now, let's count how many blocks there are **all together.**") Be sure to **use easy concepts and small numbers**, and whenever possible, **use familiar objects as examples** rather than numbers. The playground is a perfect place to practice addition with these tips below.

## AT THE PLAYGROUND

From the number of things to play on to the number of children playing, there are many ways to **use math words when visiting the playground.** Get started with these, then make up your own.

- **Count** how many big-kid swings you see, and how many little-kid swings. Then count the two groups of swings **all together.**
- If there are children on the swings, say, "There are five swings all together. And there are three children on the swings. **How many** swings don't have children on them?"
- If you see people walking dogs, ask, "Are there **more** people or dogs?" After your child answers, ask, "**How do you know?**" "Yes, we can **count to find out!**"
- **Count** your steps as you walk from the bench to the swings. Then count your steps as you walk to something else. Which took **more** steps? Which distance is **farther**?

## PLAYING OUTSIDE

Use lots of number words as you walk along.

- Have your child run to, **touch**, and **count** a few trees. Ask, "**How many** trees did you touch?" Have her run, touch, and count a few more. Then hold up your fingers to show each number. Help her **add** the numbers to find out **how many** trees she touched.
- Find a picnic table and take a rest. Ask, "Are there **more** benches or tables? So there are **fewer** tables than benches. Fewer is the opposite of **more.**"
- Say, "We each brought a water bottle, so we had **four**. I recycled mine. **How many** do we have now? **How do you know?**"
- On the way home, play a game. Say, "Let's pretend I have some stars. If I gave you **two** and I kept **three**, how many stars did I have before I gave you some?" (Fingers can be useful tools for this game.) Repeat using other objects and numbers.