

Easy Ways to Teach Children to Count Money

By Peggy Epstein, eHow Contributor

Coin Identification

Start teaching kids to count money by making sure they understand the names of every coin (including 50-cent pieces, which are still viable although rare). Also make sure kids know how much each coin is worth. Keep in mind that coin size is confusing to some kids; a dime is worth more even though it is smaller than a nickel. Ask kids to line up coins like a train with a 50-cent piece as the engine and the penny as the caboose with the "passenger cars" (nickel, dime, and quarter) in the correct order according to worth.

Matching Amounts

Rob the change jar and play a matching game by setting out a dime, for example, and asking kids to think of alternate coins to equal the same amount as a dime (10 pennies or two nickels or five pennies and one nickel, for example). After kids have mastered the smaller coins, challenge them to think of at least 10 different combinations of coins to equal 50 cents (for example, one quarter, one dime, two nickels and five pennies).

Play Toy Store

Set up a play toy store by setting out a variety of your child's toys (<http://www.ehow.com/hobbies-games/>) and attaching stickers with prices under \$1 to each toy. Give the child a combination of coins and ask what toys he can afford to buy. For example, a half-dozen nickels and a dozen pennies might seem like quite a handful of change. However, if a ball has a 49-cent sticker on it, she will need to figure out she doesn't have enough; just one 50-cent piece, however, will work.

Using Bills

Once kids have a handle on identifying and counting coins, add paper money to the mix. Make 10 stacks of 10 pennies each right next to a dollar bill and explain that they both equal 100 cents. Talk about much easier it is to carry around the dollar, and explain that is why people use bills. Next to the one-dollar bill, set out one of each: five, 10, and 20-dollar bills. Cut out pictures from magazines or catalogs showing items kids might like to buy along with the prices. Ask them to choose the combination of bills that would come closest to paying for each item, using the smallest number of bills. For example, a model car (<http://www.ehow.com/cars/>) priced at \$7.99 would most easily be paid for with a 10-dollar bill.

Take a Field Trip

Once the skills listed above are mastered, a child will benefit from a special treat consisting of an actual spending expedition. A trip to an ice-cream parlor or a doughnut shop will give the child a chance to hear the price (with the tax added on in some states) and then to count out the appropriate amount of money.

References

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- The Everything Kids' Money Book: Earn it, save it, and watch it grow!; Brette McWhorter Sember; 2008
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Resources

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- Counting Money Worksheets
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