DID YOU KNOW THAT EIGHT OUT OF 10 EARLY CHILDHOOD math products focus simply on having children learn to count to 10? This is unfortunate, because good software programs can stretch a child's emerging mathematical thinking. Here are some tips for using technology, from low- to high-tech, to develop those emerging math skills:

**LOW-TECH**
Comparing Quantities: How Long Is a Song?
Materials: one or more (ruined) cassette tapes; a trash can; and a large, open area
Few things are more interesting to a child than unraveling things (and making a nice little mess!). A ball of string, a roll of toilet paper, tape, and so on. You get the picture. I'll never forget the day one of my children discovered a smashed cassette tape in the parking lot and started to pull on one end. As the small pile became larger, a wonderful discussion started about just how long the tape really was. We decided to pull out all the tape and count off how many paces long it was.

**MID-TECH**
Sketching Numerals With the Pixter
Materials: Pixter, 3" by 5" index cards, and a marker
The Pixter is an electronic sketchpad that gives children another way to create whatever they like, including numerals. Because it is battery operated, it is incredibly easy to use. Just turn it on, and it works. You can turn the Pixter into a creative numeral station by putting it on a table with 10 3" by 5" cards, each with a numeral. This is a fun way children can practice numeral making with their own creative flair!

**HIGH-TECH**
Software Inspired Group Time
Materials: a computer with a monitor placed at children's eye level, 10 pairs of shoes of different sizes, and Millie's Math House
Here's a fun way to introduce a new computer activity. The concept works with any program, but the Little, Middle, and Big activity found in Millie's Math House is especially fun because it involves dressing up. To begin, put all the shoes in the middle of a circle. Ask the children to sort them into pairs (one-to-one correspondence) and then into groups of Little, Middle, and Big. Of course, they'll need to try them on for size. Next, have them attend to the computer screen, where you have the activity. Say, "Here's some more shoes to sort, but this time, on the computer screen." Leave the program on the computer for several weeks, so that all the children have a chance to sort in the abstract.

**MATH PRODUCT REVIEW**
Clifford Thinking Adventures
Seven logic puzzles are hidden in Clifford's neighborhood, and provide children with a variety of early number experiences. One activity reinforces one-to-one correspondence by asking children to match cars to houses in a neighborhood map. Another open-ended activity asks children to decorate a birthday cake with a selection of stickers, an open-ended number experience. The activities are simple but carefully leveled, and a sign-in screen can keep track of every child in your group.

*Scholastic Inc., 800-724-6527; [nearscholastic.com](http://nearscholastic.com); Win/Mac; $19.95. Ages 4–6.*

My First LeapPad
This responsive electronic book reader is designed to be a first introduction to the world of print. It includes...
Teaching With Technology

Several counting activities. Children can touch any word or picture to hear it named in clear speech, or play a game where they must solve simple puzzles ("can you find the red square?"). The books provide plenty of activities (we counted 14) plus a durable design that can withstand daily preschool use, clear speech, and portability. Additional features to note include a headphone jack. This toy gives you an outstanding early language experience. LeapFrog, 800-701-5327; www.leapfrog.com; $39.99. Ages 3–5.

Pixter Creativity System

Great for sketching ideas or practicing early numeral formation, this handheld creativity toy features a 3” by 3 ¼” touch-sensitive black and white screen and a stylus. Kids use the gadget to scribble, draw, or complete dot-to-dot puzzles. Note that there are five cartridges ($10 each) that expand the functionality of the toy: Learning Fun (a letter/number coloring book), Art Safari (mix and match animal parts), On the Go Games (BINGO, Tic-Tac-Toe, mazes, and concentration), Story Composer (choose a theme and then create pages, along with text), and Action Art (create simple motion pictures by combining different sequences). The toy requires 4 AA batteries. Fisher-Price, 800-432-5437; www.fisher-price.com; $50. Age 3 and up.

Millie’s Math House

Well loved throughout the years, this enjoyable program allows children to practice their early math skills by building a mouse house, counting jelly beans, and putting shoes on little creatures—all very simple, but engaging, activities. Testers’ favorite game lets them build monsters by adding just the right number of body parts. The graphics are still good, even though the program was originally created in 1992. In addition to the original activities, this version offers a concrete presentation of addition and subtraction concepts. A Spanish language version is available. Edmark, 800-691-2986; www.edmark.com; Win/Mac; $29.95 (home version) or $69.95 (school version). Ages 4–6.

THE TOP 10 MATH TECH PRODUCTS

These products move far beyond simple rote counting.


 Mighty Math Carnival Countdown! counting, comparing, sorting, patterns, place value, Edmark, 800-691-2986; www.edmark.com; Win/Mac; $29.95 (home version) or $69.95 (school version). Ages 4–6.

Millie’s Math House counting, sets, sequencing by size, shapes. Edmark, 800-691-2986; www.edmark.com; Win/Mac; $29.95 (home version) or $69.95 (school version). Ages 4–6.


My First Math Adventure counting and sorting, number lines, matching sets, patterns, attributes. DK Family Learning, 800-352-6651; usstore.dk.com; Win/Mac; $19.95. Ages 3–5.


