



## ARTICLES BY BETTY WARD CAIN

### Every Child Deserves to Feel Success

No matter what skills a child has or doesn't have, they need to feel successful. It is important to build a child's self-esteem and help them feel good about learning. Give them games they know how to do, then gradually sneak one or two new skills in and before you know it they have learned all the numbers to 20, or all the letters of the alphabet, or the sounds of all the letters, or they are beginning to read simple words.

Begin with colors or shapes. A child will begin to realize there are differences in colors and shapes. When they feel successful with these, they will be more ready to refine their observations and learn the difference between a 3 and 6 or an X or W.

First, do a matching game like the Doggie Bag game, or have your child sort matchbox cars or buttons by color. Play a game of "I spy" and find shapes in ordinary objects like a clock is shaped like a circle, or our window is shaped like a square, or the refrigerator is shaped like a rectangle. Do a numbers hunt and seek game in a magazine or book. Show the student a number and say its name. For example, "this is a four, can you find some fours on this page?"

Second, make sure the student knows what the numbers represent.

For example, hold up a number three and say, “can you give me three buttons?” Let the child count the buttons. When the student has mastered this skill, reverse the game. Lay out six buttons and have the student count them and see if they can show you the numeral six.

Make some flash card of the alphabet letters. Start with two sets and have the student match the same letters such as the Froggie game. For example they match the A to the A and the B to the B. Let them do the same with the lowercase letters. For example match the a to the a and the b to the b. When the student is successful with these, give them the letters in their name and have them lay the letters in order to spell out their first name. Teach them to spell their name aloud as they lay them in order. When they are successful with their first name, try them last name, or middle name.

If your child becomes frustrated, leave it for a while and sing a fun song. You can continue the learning later.

Be sure to keep it all a game and keep it fun.