

# Magician's Tricks

## Overview

Use magic (and math!) to play this fun family card game. You can make your own cards to play with or use a deck of regular playing cards. Put the cards in numerical order and show your child how to use their “magician’s tricks” (counting) to tell which card is selected without looking!

## Materials

Make 1-10 cards with numbers and the corresponding number of dots or use the ace and 2-10 cards from a deck of regular playing cards.

## Setting Up & Introducing the Game:

1. Place cards in a single, faceup line in numerical order. Count them together.

2. Count together while you flip each card facedown.

3. Tell your child you're going to teach them a magic trick and to pick a card!

4. Model by quietly counting the cards. Then say which number will be on the card.

5. Have your child turn over the card to see that you're right.

6. Ask your child to flip the card back over. Tell them it's their turn to be the magician!

## Playing the Game:

<p>1. Pick a card.</p>	<p>2. Remind your child, <b>“Say the magic word: ‘Abracadabra’”</b> before saying the number.</p>	<p>3. After your child says the number, flip over the card and act impressed by their magic!</p>	<p>4. Repeat with your child being the magician and you pointing to different cards.</p>

Support your child’s language skills, by asking, “How did you know?”

### Make it easier

- Use fewer cards (for example, 1-5).
- If your child has trouble figuring out the card, remind them to count silently. Help them count if needed.
- If your child can’t remember what card you selected, mark it with a coin.

### Make it harder

- Use more cards (for example, 1-20).
- Keep the selected cards face up and ask your child to count forwards or backwards from a face up card instead of counting from 1. (Cover the first cards to make counting from 1 impossible.)
  - Ask, **“Is there another way to find that number?”** and ask your child to count backward if they counted forward, or forward if they counted backward.
- Instead of putting the cards in numerical order, put them in a pile and have your child lay them out in order.

### Adding Magic: Make this game extra fun by having your child dress up as a magician!

For example: Have your child decorate a stick to use as a magic wand or have your child decorate a sweater to use as a cape.

Note: For adults and older children who can start counting from any number, leaving the cards face up makes the game easier because they can count up or down from any number, and that’s the skill we’re trying to help children develop!

Check out [LearningTrajectories.org](https://www.learningtrajectories.org) for information about your child’s math skills, other math games to play with your child, and computer games!