Number Sense Observation Checklist

For parents and educators · notice during play, not as a test

Child _____ Age _____ Observer _____

For each observation, write the date and tick N (not yet), S (sometimes) or O (often).

What to look for	Observation 1 date: ____	Observation 2 date: ____	Observation 3 date: ____	Observation 4 date: ____
Subitising				
Recognises 1 to 3 without counting	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Recognises dice patterns up to 6	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Sees a number as parts ("three and two")	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Counting with meaning				
Says one number for each object	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Knows the last number says how many	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Knows the amount stays the same when moved	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Comparing quantities				
Says which group has more (big difference)	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Compares close amounts, like 6 and 7	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Uses "more", "less" and "same" in play	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Part-whole thinking				
Finds how many are hiding (up to 5)	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Shows a number two ways on fingers	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Makes 10 in different ways	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Number relationships				
Puts numerals 0 to 10 in order	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Says one more and one less than a number	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐
Makes a sensible estimate	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐	N ☐ S ☐ O ☐

Uneven progress is normal, especially for neurodivergent children. A "not yet" today is information, not a verdict.

What I Noticed

Notes from play, and what to try next

Subitising

Try next: Quick-flash plates, dice snap, finger flashes

Counting with meaning

Try next: Count and stop, tap and drop, playdough mats

Comparing quantities

Try next: Which has more?, fair share picnic, towers

Part-whole thinking

Try next: Shake and spill, hiding bear, two-hand stories

Number relationships

Try next: Number line jumps, estimation jar

Look for number sense in everyday moments: sharing snacks, setting the table, building, tidying up. What a child does with real objects tells you more than what they say on demand.