

Number Maker: A Card Game to Practice Place Value

Got a kid who's tired of worksheets but stuck on place value? Here's a super fun game to get in some place value practice!

What You Need:

- Deck of cards
- Paper
- Pencil

What You Do:

1. Give each player paper and a pencil. Each player should draw five blank lines on his piece of paper, representing each of the values up to the ten thousands place.
2. If your child isn't quite comfortable yet with numbers of this size, you can start off with numbers up to the thousands place (four blank lines instead of five) and gradually work your way up.
3. Assuming you'd like to start with values up to the ten thousands place, though, here's how it would look:

PLAYER 1 ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

PLAYER 2 ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

4. Spend a few minutes sorting through the deck of cards. Remove any face cards and jokers. Using only the number cards and aces (which in this game, count as ones), shuffle the deck and turn all the cards face down in a pile. Take turns drawing cards from the pile. Each time a player gets a new number, she should write it in one of her digit positions. The goal is to make the five-digit number as big as possible.
5. Continue drawing cards until all five place values have been filled in. Then, have each player read her number aloud. The winner of the game is the player who creates the largest number.
6. After your child has reached a point of comfort and confidence, discuss game strategy. What place value position is the most critical in creating the largest (or smallest) number? Which are the best numbers to record in the ten thousands place? In the ones place?

Want to shake it up?

- Try using extra digits—go to six, seven, eight, or even nine places
- Change the objective of the game so the goal is to create the smallest number
- Include the joker cards to represent “0,” or make them Wild Cards so, if drawn, players can determine their value.

