Montessori Math Activity: Counting & Skip-Counting with Bead Chains

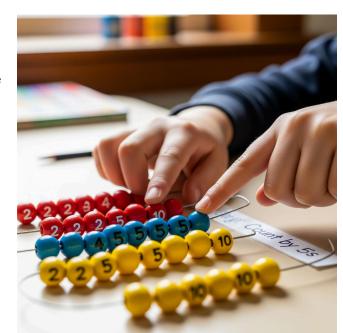
Age Group: 3-6 years

Objective:

To help young children build a strong sense of numbers, patterns, and early skip-counting in a concrete and joyful way.

Materials:

- Montessori short bead chains (2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, etc.)
- Number arrows or labels (2, 4, 6 ... for the 2-chain; 3, 6, 9 ... for the 3-chain, etc.)
- A floor mat for laying out the materials



Instructions:

- 1. Introduction: Invite the child to roll out a mat and choose a bead chain (start with 2s or 3s for younger children).
- 2. Counting Together: Lay the bead chain flat on the mat. Slowly count each bead with the child, touching each bead as you say the number.
- 3. Skip-Counting: Next, show the child how to "jump" along the chain—counting by 2s or 3s instead of ones. For example, "2, 4, 6, 8..." while pointing to each group of beads.
- 4. Number Labels: Place number arrows at each "stop" along the chain (2, 4, 6 ...). This helps the child visually connect the quantity of beads with the



written numeral.

5. Discovery: Ask gentle questions like, "What do you notice about the numbers?" or "Does the chain get longer as we go?" Encourage curiosity rather than giving "right answers."

Why It Works for 3–6:

- Concrete to abstract: Children see and touch the beads before they ever learn multiplication facts.
- Pattern recognition: Early exposure to skip-counting builds the foundation for multiplication and division later.
- Joyful engagement: Children love the colorful beads and the sense of discovery when numbers "grow" across the chain.

Extensions for Older 5–6 Year Olds:

- Use longer chains (like the chain of 5 or 10) to explore higher numbers.
- Invite the child to notice how skip-counting connects to familiar ideas (like days of the week, fingers, or counting steps).