

NUMBERBOW

Sara loved beautiful colors. She

loved dressing in bright purples, pinks, yellows, reds, and greens. Every time we worked together, I complimented her on her brilliant selections. Her fashion sense led to a colorful new addition game.

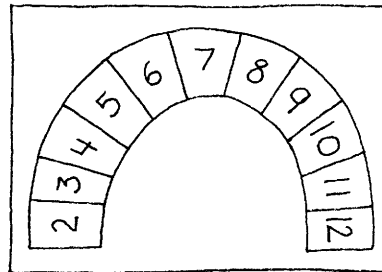
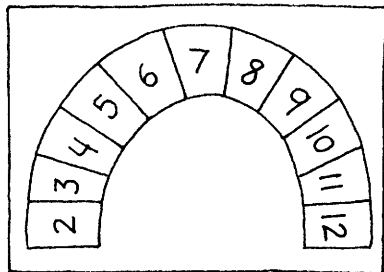
I made two identical boards that looked like this:

GRADES

kindergarten and first

MATERIALS

two sheets of paper
pencil
crayons or colored pencils
dice



I showed them to her.

“Oh,” she said. “These look like rainbows.”

“They are, in a way. We’re even going to use crayons to color the different boxes. Only you can’t color just any box. You have to throw two dice, add up the numbers, and whatever answer you get, you color. If you already colored that number, you’re stuck until your next turn. We both take ten turns. After that we compare and see who has the most colorful rainbow. The one with the most colors is the winner.”

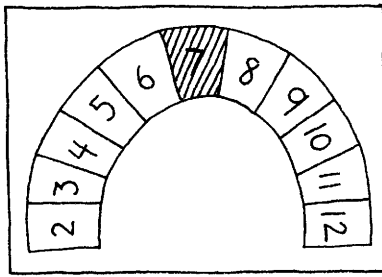
“Can I use any colors I want?” Sara asked.

“Any colors in my crayon collection. It’s your rainbow,” I replied.

“It’s really a NUMBERBOW,” she said with a laugh.

“You’re right. That’s a great name for this game. From now on it’s called NUMBERBOW.”

We began the game. Sara tossed the dice and came up with a three and a four. She wasn’t sure how to add these numbers. I suggested she count the dots on the dice. She did and got her total: seven. Sara chose a red crayon and began coloring her NUMBERBOW.



Then it was my turn. I tossed double twos. My score? Four. I selected purple for my first color.

Sara took a second turn. She rolled a two and a five. Seven again. Her seven was already bright red. There was nothing to do but pass the dice back to me. We kept playing until we'd each had ten turns. In the end, my NUMBERBOW was more colorful. Sara wasn't discouraged, however. In fact, she wanted to play again—right away. And so we did. We played twice more that day and many more times in the weeks that followed. NUMBERBOW became a regular feature of Sara's tutoring time. Initially she counted dots on the dice or used her fingers to get her score. Then some of the combinations became automatic. By the time Sara was bored with NUMBERBOW, she'd memorized all the possible addition combinations you can make with two dice.

During our first games, Sara and I got so carried away we forgot to keep track of our turns.

"Was that your sixth or seventh throw?" I'd ask.

"I don't remember," Sara answered.

We came up with a solution to this problem. We kept track of our turns with tally marks. Every time we took a turn, we drew a small slash on the bottom of our game boards. That way, we always knew how many turns we'd used up and how many chances remained to color our NUMBERBOWS.

