

# Mathematical Symbol Recognition in Children

Sandra Street

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, WI, US

**Abstract:** In early mathematics development the development of symbolic skills is critical to math learning. Our mathematical system is based on Arabic number symbols which do not provide any semantic meaning relevant to the number words and symbols. In order to succeed in math one must be able to recognize and understand the meaning of numeric and other mathematical symbols. Little is known about the development of these symbolic skills. The current study examines 4 -7-year-old children's understanding and recognition of number and arithmetic symbols. The youngest children made significant errors in identifying numbers as well as confusing letter symbols with number symbols. Results reveal a developmental progression of numeric symbol recognition.