About Teaching Place Value

Meaning of Place Value for Young Learners;

Place value means understanding the value represented by a number given its position.
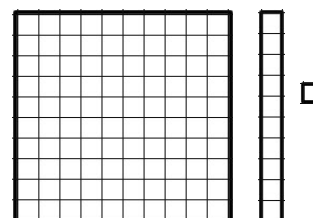
Take the number 347:
> A child may recognize that this number is 347. If they truly understand place value, they will be able to say that it's 347, the 3 means 3-hundreds, the 4 means 4 tens and the 7 means 7 ones.

Although this concept sounds simple, learning it can be extremely difficult for many children. If this concept is not fully taught and understand, many problems will be encountered later.

To ensure success when teaching the concept, use the place value or base 10 blocks. These blocks can be purchased from most educational supply stores. If not, they it's useful to have the patterns for the blocks on paper and cut them out.

The blocks look like these: The large represents 100, the strip repre- sents 10 and the single unit represents 1. These 3 blocks would rep- resent the number 111.
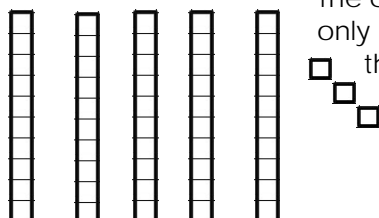
Now what?

Once children can count to 100 reasonably well. Place value patterns or blocks should be used. Children need many experiences representing numbers with the patterns or blocks.

You would say: show me the number 87 and the child would put out 8 –10 strips and 7 single units. As they learn numbers beyond 100, you can repeat the process.

Have children represent many numbers for you.

Why do this? Place value blocks and pattern shapes help children grasp the concept that 7 in 70 doesn't mean 7, it means 7—10s. If children don't have experience with place value con- cepts. They will struggle when it comes time to add, subtract, multiply and divide.
They will struggle with regrouping (borrowing, carrying) because they're not understanding the actual value of the numbers.

When teaching subtraction—this of it this way. The number is 53 and I need to subtract 7:
The child represents 53. The child cannot take 7 away because he only has 3—1's. this is when you trade 1 –1– strip for 10 ones. He can then take 7 away and it able to count how many are left.

There are many books and articles written to support teaching this concept, I have merely given a brief snapshot with this article.