



# **The Cradle of Culture and What Children Know About Writing and Numbers Before Being (Developing Mind Series)**

*Liliana Tolchinsky*

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This book provides a thrilling description of preliterate children's developing ideas about writing and numerals, and it illustrates well the many ways in which cultural artifacts influence the mind and vice versa. Remarkably, children treat writing and numerals as distinct even before they have received any formal training on the topic, and well before they learn how to use writing to represent messages and numerals to represent quantities.

In this revolutionary new book, Liliana Tolchinsky argues that preliterate children's experiences with writing and numerals play an essential and previously unsuspected role in children's subsequent development. In this view, learning notations, such as writing is not just a matter of acquiring new instruments for communicating existing knowledge. Rather, there is a continual interaction between children's understanding of the features of a notational system and their understanding of the corresponding domain of knowledge. The acquisition of an alphabetic writing system transforms children's view of language, and the acquisition of a formal system of enumeration transforms children's understanding of numbers.

Written in an engaging narrative style, and richly illustrated with historical examples, case studies, and charming descriptions of children's behavior, this book is aimed not only at cognitive scientists, but also at educators, parents, and anyone interested in how children develop in a cultural context.

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