

Magic bag and counting skills

An attractive shiny draw string bag containing a toy duck, frog, monkey, bun and string of sausages is swung as we sing the magic bag song – “Magic bag, magic bag, what’s in the magic bag?”



The children are encouraged to sit on small chairs to wait for their turn to choose an item. For example, a sausage is chosen from the bag, two sausages are produced in a pan and using the large A4 Numicon images of 2, and then 1, the song is sung carefully.

The sausages and frogs are used to practice pointing and counting. Each child and parent has a turn to use their counting finger and point 1, 2.

The ducks, buns and monkeys are used alongside the large Numicon and digit images for 1 and 2 providing opportunities for the child to recognize the digit and its Numicon representation.

These images are continuously brought to the child’s attention as we sing each song and count. The frogs and ducks are hidden under the cloth (pond) to be found at the end of the song (early memory skills) as we sing. Once found the children are helped to count them onto a large two shape.

When each song gets to “one” we encourage the children to wiggle their one finger - their counting/pointing finger. In all of these songs the focus is on counting and numbers rather than on signing.

Resources

- Magic bag with a duck, string of sausages, frog, bun and monkey in it.
- A box with 2 ducks, 2 sausages, 2 frogs, 2 buns and 2 monkeys
- Blue cloth, small frying pan, real log, bun tray, bag for monkeys
- A4 images/mats of 1 and 2
- Children’s chairs in a circle. Use the smaller wooden chairs so they can get on and off easier.

Activities

Start by asking and waiting for good sitting. Then swing the bag and sing the 'magic bag' song

'magic bag, magic bag, what's in the magic bag'

Choose a child who is doing good sitting to select an item from the bag:

String of sausages:

Let the child keep the sausages (or remove them if too distracting). Get out the A4 images for one and two and place them on the floor with number two on top and number one underneath. Place the two sausages in the pan and wiggle your counting finger over the sausages and count '*one, two*', move round the circle so that everybody, including adults, practises counting '*one, two*', by pointing to each sausage in turn. Encourage parents to help guide their child's pointing/counting finger.

Sing the first verse of the song:

'two fat sausages sizzling in a pan, one went pop (make a popping sound with a finger in your mouth) *and then it went bang* (clap your hands together loudly)

Choose a child to remove one sausage.

Swap over the A4 number images so that you have number one showing. Then say and sign '*how many sausages.....one*' show your wiggly one finger and encourage all present to do the same.

Then pass a 'hi one' to each child and adult. (this is like a Hi5)

Point to count 'one'. (It is harder to say 'one' than 'two')

Repeat the song.

Then say '*all gone*' and encourage the children to place the sausages back in the pan as you count '*one, two*'

Frog

Get out the blue cloth and make a pond, place the log on the pond and place the images for number two and one in a pile next to the log, with number two in top. Count out two frogs onto the log.



Then take the log round the children and adults and encourage everyone to have a go at pointing to count 'one, two'.

Sing the first verse of the song:

'two little speckled frogs sat on a speckled log eating some most delicious grubs, yum, yum, one jumped into the pool (act this out and hide the frog under the cloth) where it was nice a cool, then there was (swap over the numbers so number one showing on top) one green speckled frog glub, glub'

Wiggle your 'wiggly one finger' and point to count the one frog.

Sing the next verse.

When the last frog has been hidden. Sign and say – 'where's the frogs?' Encourage the children to find them under the cloth and count onto the large Numicon shape for two, then plop drop them back into the box.

Duck

Get out the blue cloth and make a little pond. Place the A4 images for one and two in a pile next to the pond with two on top. Count out 2 ducks onto the pond placing them next to each other in the Numicon format. Then point and count 'one two' and draw the attention of the group to the A4 image for two.



Sing the first verse of the song:

'two little ducks went swimming one day, over the pond and far away, mummy duck said – quack, quack, quack, quack...' swim one duck under the cloth and pause while you expose the A4 image of one, hiding the image for two under the pile...then continue singing *'...and only one little duck came back'* draw the groups attention to the A4 image for one and count the one duck.

Sing the next verse.

When you get to *'no little ducks came swimming back'* replace the word **'no'** with **'zero'** and sing *'zero little ducks came swimming back'*. We haven't yet introduced zero – but we will do soon. For now it is ok to sing and sign the word **'zero'**



We then have one final verse where *'sad mummy duck went swimming one day, over the pond and far away, mummy duck said quack, quack, quack, quack..'* then pause as you sign and say *'where's the ducks'* if the children are too young or not quite ready they will not know to jump up and look for the ducks, but they will soon learn and love to drag the cloth away and find the ducks. Once exposed count the two ducks onto the large A4 image for two and wave bye bye to them as you drop them back into the box.



Monkey

Get out the A4 images for two and one, in a pile with two on top. If you can manage to find monkeys that you can hang from your arm attached by velcro, these work best as you can swing them in front of a child and encourage them to track and then grab the monkey.



Draw the attention of the group to the A4 image for two and start the first verse of the song *'two cheeky monkeys swinging in a tree, teasing Mr crocodile, you can't catch me, along came Mr Crocodile, as quiet as can be...'*

dangle the monkey in front of a child and encourage them to *snap* the monkey (pull it off your arm)

'... and snap went the crocodile...oh dear me'

Sign and say *'how many monkeys...one'* draw attention to the A4 image for one and show a 'wiggly one' finger, pass a 'hi 1' round the group.

Sing the next verse.

When the last monkey gets snapped up just finish the song. Later we will bring in zero.

Make a fuss of getting the monkeys back in the bag (I keep them in a bag in the box) and the children have to stuff them back into the bag.

Buns

Place 2 currant buns (we use knitted ones) on a tray next to the A4 image for two (two and one in a pile with the two on top). Later we will introduce money but to start with just encouraging the children to move from their chair to take a bun and return to their chair is sufficient.

Again draw attention to the A4 image for two and show the two buns in the bun tray.

Emphasise *'two buns'*

Sing the first verse of the song

'two currant buns in a bakers shop, round and fat with a cherry on the top, along came <child's name – say and sign> with a penny one day...' Encourage a child to get off their chair and take one bun,

'.. bought a currant bun and took it away'

Wait until the child is sat back on their chair then

sign and say '*how many buns?*' draw attention to the A4 image for one, point and count one bun and sing the next verse.

When you reach the end of the song, collect the buns back in by encouraging the children to place them back in the bun tray 'one, two' in the correct positions so that they are in Numicon format.

