

Other counting activities

Feed the fish

Cut out some cardboard fish and write numerals between 1 and 5 on them. Attach a paper clip to each fish and spread them out on a blue cloth on the floor. Have ready a basket of up to 5 worms (I use brown corrugated cardboard cut into worm shapes). Using a magnetic fishing rod take turns to catch a fish, read the number, match it to the correct Numicon shape and count out the correct number of worms.

Counting can be either into a Numicon number line or into the Numicon format. Once counted by moving, check again by pointing to count. Reinforce the end number as the number of worms you are going to feed the fish.

Act out feeding the fish.

Increase difficulty by:

Including zero – no worms, poor hungry fish!

Including more than the correct number of worms in the basket so the child learns when to stop to correspond the number counted with the numeral. Cardinality.

Include higher numbers for those who are ready.

Frogs on logs

Set out Numicon shapes 1 to 6 or the number line 1 to 6. Have ready a basket of plastic frogs, a real log, a blue cloth and a large spinner with digits 1 to 6 on display (or set out number cards 1 to 6 in a circle and use a bottle to spin). Set the log in the 'pond' and take turns to spin the spinner, say the number selected, chose the corresponding Numicon image and count out that number of frogs onto the corresponding Numicon shape/image, then count onto the log. Jump each one into the pond as you count them again.

When each child has had a turn sing the speckled frogs song.

Spotty dogs and spotty rabbits

Draw or print out some A4 pictures of dogs or rabbits and draw between 3 and 6 spots on them. Have a basket on Numicon pegs ready and Numicon shapes 3 to 6. Ask the child to choose between rabbit and dog (sign and say), then give them the correct picture with their target number of spots on.

Ask the child to point and count the spots – or share the task if this is too difficult. Then give them the correct number of Numicon pegs to place out in one to one correspondence onto the spots. This will very likely be a motor activity while you count. Then ask them to point and count again – possibly as a shared task – you point while they count.

Next reinforce the number of spots/pegs by giving them the correct Numicon shape and asking them to count the pegs onto the Numicon shape.

Swap round pictures so give them the other animal but with the same number of spots.

Increase difficulty

Have Numicon shapes 1 to 6 in a line for them to choose the correct shape.

Egg boxes

Have an egg box for each child, a basket of six pebbles for each child and a die with 4, 5 and 6 in Numicon and numeral representation (if this is too much reduce numbers to 2, 3 and 4). Enough shapes for each child.

Take turns to roll the die. Give out the corresponding Numicon shape to each child and the correct number of pebbles. Each child counts the pebbles into their egg box copying the Numicon pattern. Start at the bottom and place pebbles in twos.



Finish by posting the pebbles down a cardboard tube into a tin counting for each child in turn.

Different numbers of legs

Have a plastic rhino, snake, kangaroo, lion, person, etc. Numicon images for 2 and 4 and number card for zero. Let each child choose an animal and count its number of legs.

Reinforce with the correct Numicon image or zero. For example when the snake is chosen, ask 'how many legs'...'zero legs', sign, say and show the number card zero.