

Essential foundations for counting



Group recognition or Subitising

The HfL Primary Mathematics and Early Years teams would like to thank the following settings for their support in the production of these materials:

Four Seasons Pre-school, Stevenage
Roebuck Primary School, Stevenage
Watton-at-Stone Primary School and Nursery
Little Tulips Day Nursery, Welwyn Garden City
Watford Field Infant and Nursery
Coates Way Juniors Mixed, Infants and Nursery School, Watford
Fingerprints Preschool, Watford
Oakwood Primary School, St Albans

This document is designed to work alongside the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework and guidance from the DfE, to build a sense of number and quantity across the EYFS. It provides practical suggestions to achieve firmly embedded pre-counting skills and enrich further learning opportunities. The scaffolding of high-quality language, for use by adults and children, is a key ingredient of the resource and is informed by the **HfL Working mathematically** document.

Each of the skills – **comparison, classification, pattern** and **group recognition (subitising)** – is organised in a progression of four steps, in which children notice, **copy, extend** and **create**. Guidance for “What adults could do” and “What adults could provide”, as well as the “Behaviours a child could demonstrate to show understanding” for each of these, is included.

Skill	What adults could do	What adults could provide	Behaviours a child could demonstrate to show understanding
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Introduction

Have you ever thought about what comes before counting? Advisers from the HfL Early Years and Mathematics teams have been working together with practitioners from schools and settings to answer this question. Sometimes the results were surprising. Adapting practice and provision in the very early stages of learning is vital in underpinning the essential foundations for counting.

"This has been a valuable project for us as staff and ultimately in extending and developing the learning of our children. Thank you :)"
EYFS Leader, Watton-at-Stone Primary School

"We didn't realise how much comes before counting and numbers and have already been implementing some of the ideas and activities with our children."
Manager, Four Seasons Pre-School

From the action research, as part of the development of these materials, the powerful learning that we saw did not include any numerals at all but instead focused on children's language, thinking and understanding. This formed the basis of the four pre-counting skills, which you will find in the accompanying booklets, along with lots of ideas for how to make this happen for your children. A range of research has shown that many children have been missing out on these pre-counting skills, which form the foundation of all mathematical understanding.

Comparison

Classification

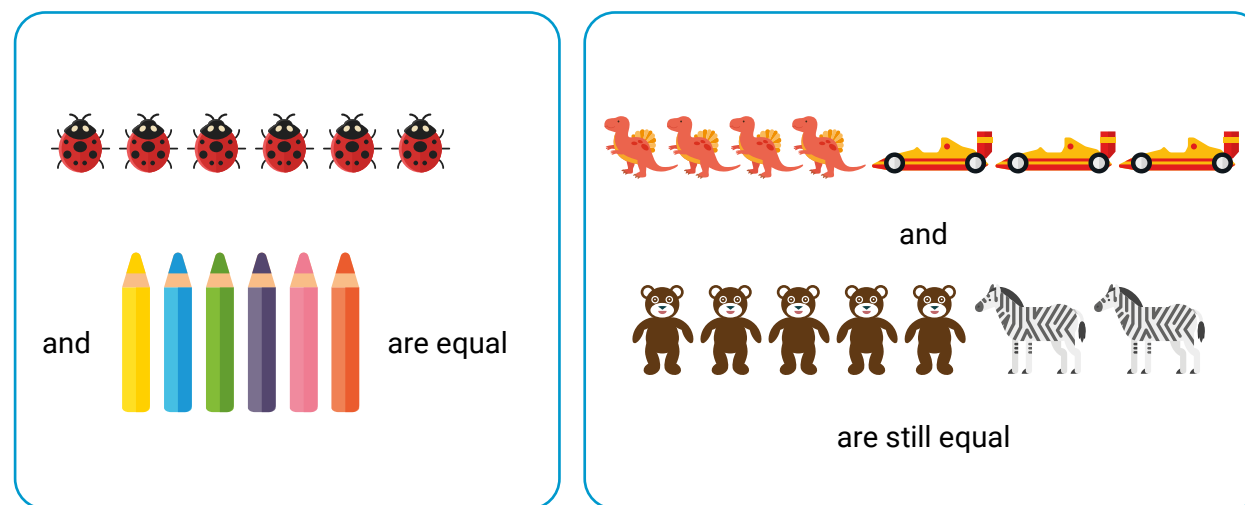
Pattern

Group recognition (Subitising)

Often practitioners tell us that it is difficult to find enough evidence for mathematical development through their observations. These materials will support you and your team in providing more opportunities during child-initiated play, and in developing staff skills and high-quality language for mathematical learning.

By working closely with practitioners, we have developed a progression in pre-counting skills. We have decided to call the steps **notice**, **copy**, **extend** and **create**. There is an interconnectivity between the skills, when children are presented with rich mathematical learning opportunities and environmental provision.

The crucial principle of **conservation** (i.e. where children understand that a quantity will not change even when the objects compared appear to be different in size or move their position) permeates throughout the four pre-counting skills and will benefit from lots of practice.



Comparison

Classification

Pattern

Group recognition (Subitising)

Conservation

We need to ensure that children experience and explore the idea that a quantity does not change just because we are counting objects of different types and sizes, moving objects, or creating different arrangements of objects. Children will continue to secure their understanding well into Key Stage 1.

Group recognition or Subitising

What is it?

Before actually counting, children are aware of small numbers of things, and research shows that most children entering school can identify quantities of three things or less just by looking, without counting. This is called “subitising” or “group recognition”. Being able to recognise quantities of up to five or six is important for several reasons:

1. It saves time

Recognising the number in a small group is much faster than counting each individual member of that group.

2. It builds important foundations for number

Children who can subitise will begin to compare numbers by their size, such as three is more than two, and one is less than four.

3. It helps develop more sophisticated counting skills

Children who recognise the number in a small group will begin to count on from there more quickly.

4. It accelerates the development of addition and subtraction

Being able to recognise the quantity in a small group frees children of the burden of counting small quantities to be added or taken away, and allows them to concentrate on the action of the operation.

What does it look like in EYFS?

Children can recognise the number of objects in a small group and tell you how many there are before they can accurately count. This ability to recognise quantities of groups comes from children’s everyday experiences – playing with two cars, having three rice cakes, etc. From this engagement in the world around them, children make links, develop ideas of groupings and begin to notice patterns. In role play, children use group recognition, which enables them to represent and act out their experiences, both individually and with others. Within these role-play situations, children have opportunities to maintain focus and show high levels of fascination. When they use group recognition, they are paying attention to details; for example, when there are three teddies at the tea party, they will need three plates and three cakes.

Group recognition or subitising, especially of dot patterns, enables children to make comparisons between quantities – noticing patterns and developing concepts such as more, less, similarity and difference. Group recognition is a key factor in enabling children to make the jump from counting to calculating. As they become more familiar with dot patterns, they notice two groups of three make six, for example. They could then move on to test ideas and check whether two groups of three always make six.

What it leads to

Very young children can recognise and identify qualities. These skills need to be nurtured and developed, and not lost when children learn to count. Children use group recognition in early calculation when working with representations of numbers rather than numerals. As children learn to internalise number groups, they can go on to formulate calculation strategies.

Vocabulary

same

different

guess

match

more

less

fewer

Statutory mathematics educational programme

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage

Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five – published March 2021.

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

Characteristics of effective learning		
Playing and exploring children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'	Active learning children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements	Creating and thinking critically children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

For further detail, refer to non-statutory guidance

Working mathematically

By linking the **Characteristics of effective learning** to the **HfL Working mathematically** document, as illustrated below, it is possible to see how children's reasoning and problem-solving skills can be developed in all learning, deepening the application of their mathematical understanding. It is crucial that adults focus on language development. This enables children to engage in rich mathematical talk and demonstrate their understanding.

Application	
Ideas, questions and lines of enquiry	• chooses and identifies ways of bringing mathematical thinking to everyday activities - <i>shows curiosity, is willing to have a go and begins to develop an approach, e.g. trial and error</i> - <i>makes connections and asks questions about aspects that are familiar</i> • selects appropriate resources and adapts work where necessary • asks appropriate questions relevant to the activity and finds new ways to do things
Represent and communicate	• uses talk to connect ideas and describe what is happening - <i>creates simple representations of the story of the problem</i> • captures experiences and responses in a range of ways - <i>constructs and/or makes marks with a purpose in mind</i> - <i>records, using marks that they can interpret and explain</i> • uses talk to organise their activities, taking account of one another's ideas, and checks how well it is going • in practical activities and discussion, begins to use the vocabulary involved in mathematical thinking
Plan an approach and implement it	• draws on their knowledge of their familiar world to make decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal • initiates activities and seeks challenge, applying their knowledge of mathematical concepts and appropriate vocabulary, e.g. counting, comparing, pattern making • checks how well their activities are going, changes strategy as needed and reviews how well the approach worked
Computational complexity (within the range of number facts known)	• shows an interest in number problems • responds to instructions involving a two-part sequence

Reasoning	
Make connections	• uses talk to make links and notice patterns in their experiences • uses their experience to test their ideas and anticipate what might happen • comments and asks questions about aspects of their familiar world
Evaluate	• questions why things happened and gives explanations
Draw conclusions	• makes predictions and tests them, e.g. developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect • answers how and why questions about their experiences
Generalise	• recognises similarities between learning experiences and begins to use this understanding in new contexts - <i>realises not only objects but anything can be counted, including steps, claps or jumps</i> • builds up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences to describe patterns and characteristics of the world around them
Justify	• uses talk to clarify thinking • talks about why things happen and how things work

Problem solving
• chooses ways to do things • checks how well their activities are going • notices patterns in their experiences • uses a range of ways to capture experiences • looks closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change • makes decisions about how to approach a task



Criteria for planning and assessing subitising

Subitising	What adults could do	What adults could provide	Behaviours a child could demonstrate to show understanding
Notice	• help children to recognise groups of objects and marks in familiar positions • use everyday materials with consistent grouping of marks, such as playing cards, dominoes and dice, to play games • action songs with quantities up to five • play matching games to point out groups of marks that are the same • play snap • model guessing a quantity up to four in different contexts, such as snack time or pencils in a pot • reaffirm children's guesses by modelling accurate counting, pointing to each mark until children no longer require this level of support • play games that enable children to develop their visual discrimination and memory, such as Kim's Game, so that children can notice what is the same, different or missing	• everyday materials with consistent grouping of marks, such as dice, playing cards, dominoes • number lines and floor tiles, with dots corresponding to numerals • different types of dice, for indoor and outdoor use • large and small playing cards that represent quantity to 10 • varied sets of dominoes • frequent interactive displays, which use different materials to present quantities up to five in a familiar arrangement • egg boxes, muffin trays and candleholder, as everyday examples of regular representations of number • coloured objects that can be arranged in small groups, e.g. counters, compare bears	• children will have a go at guessing a number of marks or objects • children will be able to instantly recognise and say the correct quantity without counting marks or objects • children will begin to point out and independently seek familiar arrangements of groups of objects or marks

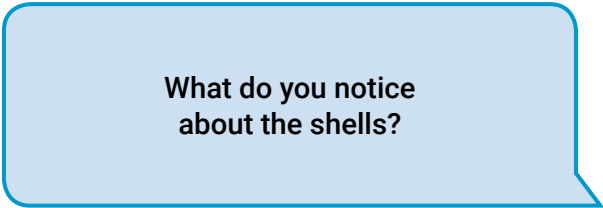
Subitising	What adults could do	What adults could provide	Behaviours a child could demonstrate to show understanding
Copy	• arrange identical groups of objects and marks, and help children to recognise the exact match • play matching games such as snap to reinforce the match and its value, e.g. a five of clubs and a five of hearts. Then ask the children to copy the pattern using objects • make your own playing cards, to repeat the positions of the markings • encourage children to have a go at matching a small group of natural objects that you have arranged • encourage children to talk about what is the same • provide examples of incomplete groupings or markings, and encourage the children to complete the arrangement to make an exact match, e.g. "There is one shell missing here. Where does it go?" • provide examples in which the number of objects or marks are equal but their positions do not exactly match, e.g. "Can you help me to move this ball so that it is in the right place?"	• everyday materials with consistent grouping of marks such as dice, playing cards, dominoes • number lines and floor tiles with dots, corresponding to numerals • different types of dice, for indoor and outdoor use • large and small playing cards that represent numbers to 10 • varied sets of dominoes • egg boxes, muffin trays and candleholder, as everyday examples of regular representations of number • many varied objects that can be arranged in small groups that are natural and manmade • images and photographs that reinforce the regular arrangements of numbers, for the children to copy • opportunities to copy groupings, using as many different media as possible	• children will have a go at copying the number of objects or marks they can see and count, in the correct positions • children will be able to instantly recognise and say the correct quantity in the original arrangement and will make their copy with confidence • children will find familiar models to copy • children will look critically at different arrangements, to identify exact matches • children will identify missing characteristics in inaccurate replicas • children will remain confident that they can replicate the new model accurately when the objects are changed or moved • children will be able to explain the accuracy of their copy

Subitising	What adults could do	What adults could provide	Behaviours a child could demonstrate to show understanding
Extend	• play games that enable children to recognise quantities in regular and irregular representations, e.g. packs of cards with varied dot arrangements or flashcards of varied dot arrangements, for children to recognise in a short time • point out and model when children recognise familiar arrangements of objects or marks within a larger group, e.g. "I can see three cakes in the muffin tray. What can you see?" • encourage children to have a go and talk about quantities they can see, prompting further recognition such as "I can see three eggs in the egg box and three spaces for more eggs" • empower parents to continue conversations about recognising quantities at home	• irregular patterns of small quantities of objects or marks • irregular patterns of larger quantities of objects or marks, in order that children can begin to recognise the familiar smaller numbers within the larger arrangement • interactive displays, providing examples of regular and irregular arrangements of objects or marks • many and varied examples and opportunities to recognise and rearrange small numbers of objects • a larger collection of objects, which could be regrouped into smaller collections; for example: regrouping five into a group of three and a group of two	• children will be able to recognise smaller quantities in different arrangements, up to six objects, depending upon the ways in which they are arranged • children will begin to recognise smaller quantities within a larger arrangement of marks or objects • children will be confident in their approach and demonstrate resilience when regrouping larger quantities, visually, using their memory of familiar groups • children will talk about the arrangements they can see and recognise • children will talk about how they use the numbers they recognise and know how to break up larger quantities
Create	• model arranging items in familiar positions, in small groups • plan activities that encourage children to regroup objects from a larger group into smaller groups, to make regular and irregular arrangements, talking about recognisable quantities during the process • seize opportunities during independent learning and encourage children to explore many different ways of arranging groups of quantities they recognise	• a variety of mark-making implements, for children to recreate quantities they recognise in familiar arrangements, e.g. bingo markers, ink stamps • play dough, salt dough, clay with cake trays, chocolate trays and other implements, to order and organise small amounts in varied arrangements • opportunities for children to independently use open-ended resources that invite them to apply group recognition skills, indoors and outdoors, when subitising naturally occurs; for example, blocks of different sizes, junk modelling	• children will meet their own challenges, using objects and mark-making tools to create familiar groupings • children will begin to use their group-recognition skills to regroup numbers; for example, the children will recognise three conkers and count one more • children will be able to explain how they identified small quantities

The following pages provide exemplification of **some** of the criteria, to illustrate how they could be achieved across provision.

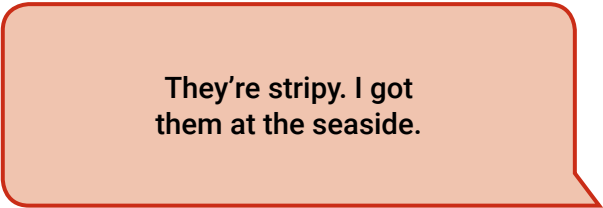
In the illustrations you will see the following:

Blue speech bubbles indicate key questions and teaching points for adults

A blue speech bubble with a tail pointing to the bottom right.

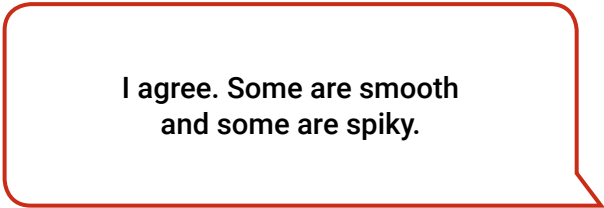
What do you notice about the shells?

Red speech bubbles indicate things children may say

A red speech bubble with a tail pointing to the bottom right.

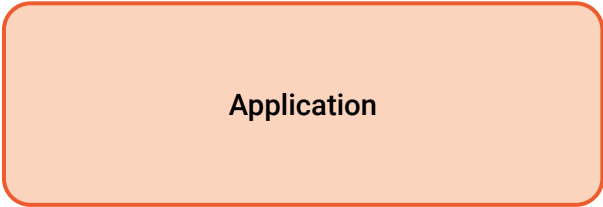
They're stripy. I got them at the seaside.

White speech bubbles with a red outline indicate how the child's talk could be remodelled by an adult

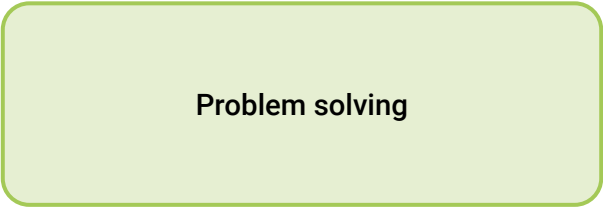
A white speech bubble with a red outline and a tail pointing to the bottom right.

I agree. Some are smooth and some are spiky.

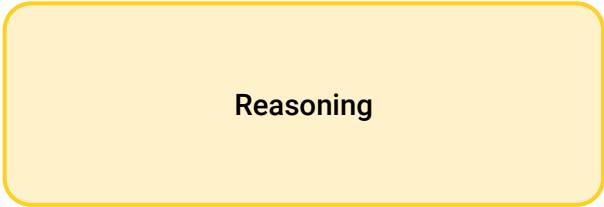
Rectangular boxes indicate **Working mathematically** criteria, as follows:

An orange rectangular box with rounded corners and a thin orange border.

Application

A green rectangular box with rounded corners and a thin green border.

Problem solving

A yellow rectangular box with rounded corners and a thin yellow border.

Reasoning

Subitising – NOTICE: What adults could do

- help children to recognise groups of objects and marks in familiar positions



What do you notice about the lids?
Can you tell me anything about them?

There are three here and three here.

You notice there are three lids each time, even though the lids are in different arrangements.

Make connections

Uses talk to make links and notice patterns in their experiences

- play matching games to point out groups of marks that are the same
- play snap



These marks look similar to me. Do you think so too?

Yes, there are three dots on the domino and three dots on spoon – the same.

You noticed there are three marks each time in a line on both.

Make connections

Uses talk to make links and notice patterns in their experiences

Subitising – NOTICE: What adults could do

- model guessing a quantity up to four in different contexts, such as snack time or pencils in a pot



What do you notice about the snacks?
Can you tell me anything about them?

I can see three.

You notice there are three snacks each time, even though they look different.

Make connections

Uses talk to make links and notice patterns in their experiences

- play games that enable children to develop their visual discrimination and memory, such as Kim's Game, so that children can notice what is the same, different or missing



What do you notice about the things on this tray?
What's the same and what's different?

Two blue things.

You notice there are two blue things on this tray.
Are there two yellow things?

Represent and communicate

Uses talk to connect ideas and describe what is happening

Review and evaluate

Behaviours a child could demonstrate to show understanding:

- children will have a go at guessing a number of marks or objects
- children will be able to instantly recognise and say the correct quantity without counting marks or objects
- children will begin to point out and independently seek familiar arrangements of groups of objects or marks

Observation:

Evie said, **"I can see six eggs in the box."**

Evaluation:

Evie is pointing out a familiar pattern of six, like on dice.

Observation:

Oliver guessed there were three bananas in the group. He then said, **"That looks like three bananas."**

Evaluation:

Oliver is guessing sensible amounts before counting.

Observation:

Jude said, **"There are only two apples left."**

Evaluation:

Jude is 28 months old and instantly recognised only two apples in a bowl of fruit.

Observation:

Leo said, **"There are three lids."**

Evaluation:

Leo is able to instantly recognise three; he did not need to count them.

Subitising – COPY: What adults could do

- arrange identical groups of objects and marks, and help children to recognise the exact match
- play matching games, such as snap, to reinforce the match and its value, e.g. a five of clubs and a five of hearts. Then ask the children to copy the pattern using objects



Can you copy the dots on the die with the conkers?

There are four dots and four conkers.

I agree.
I can see the four dots and the matching conkers.

Make connections

Uses talk to make links and notice patterns in their experiences

- encourage children to have a go at matching a small group of natural objects that you have arranged



Can you make your shells look like my pebbles?

Yes, I have five shells.

You have five shells in the same arrangement as my pebbles.

Represent and communicate

Uses talk to connect ideas and describe what is happening

Subitising – COPY: What adults could do

- provide examples of incomplete groupings or markings and encourage the children to complete the arrangement to make an exact match



What will you need to do with your lids to make yours look the same as Tom's?

I need to put the yellow ones and the red ones in threes.

You have copied four of the groups of lids, and now there are two more groups to make, for it to be exactly the same.

Make connections

Uses talk to make links and notice patterns in their experiences

- provide examples in which the numbers of objects or marks are equal but their positions do not exactly match, e.g. "Can you help me to move this ball so that it is in the right place?"



What do you notice about the shells? What's the same and what's different?

I've got six shells in the box and in a line, just like you.

You notice there are six shells in each set, but the groups look different.

Represent and communicate

Uses talk to connect ideas and describe what is happening

Review and evaluate

Behaviours a child could demonstrate to show understanding:

- children will have a go at copying the number of objects or marks they can see and count, in the correct positions
- children will be able to instantly recognise and say the correct quantity in the original arrangement and will make their copy with confidence
- children will find familiar models to copy
- children will look critically at different arrangements, to identify exact matches
- children will identify missing characteristics in inaccurate replicas
- children will remain confident that they can replicate the new model accurately when the objects are changed or moved
- children will be able to explain the accuracy of their copy

Observation:

Oliver saw the saucepans in their new places and said, **"I'm going to put this one here so that it is the same."**

Evaluation:

Oliver is able to instantly recognise the difference and where the replication had gone wrong. He did not need to count them and knew that moving the pan would replicate the model accurately.

Observation:

Leo counted the six dots on the die and copied the pattern with the pine cones. **"That looks just the same."**

Evaluation:

Leo is having a go at copying the number of marks and their positions.

Observation:

Jude said, **"That's a one and that's a two,"** looking at the dice in the game; he did not recognise any other groupings.

Evaluation:

Jude is pointing out a familiar pattern of one and two on dice.

Observation:

Evie saw the eggs in the box and put six eggs in an empty egg box, saying, **"I need six like the eggs in the box."**

Evaluation:

Evie instantly recognises six eggs and is able to replicate it.

Subitising – EXTEND: What adults could do

- play games that enable children to recognise quantities in regular and irregular representations, e.g. packs of cards with varied dot arrangements, or flashcards of varied dot arrangements, for children to recognise within a short time



SNAP – I can see three hearts on my card.
What do you see?

I've got a pair of threes.
I'm going to get the spoon
with three dots.

You can see the three
diamonds on your card are
in the same place as my
three hearts and the three
dots on the spoon.

Make connections

Uses talk to make links and notice
patterns in their experiences

- point out and model when adults recognise familiar arrangements of objects or marks within a larger group, e.g. "I can see three cakes in the muffin tray. What can you see?"



I can see three cakes in a
row in the muffin tin.
What can you see?

There are three muffins
and some empty ones.

You notice there are three
muffins in the tin and
other spaces for more.

Represent and communicate

Uses talk to connect ideas and
describe what is happening

Review and evaluate

Behaviours a child could demonstrate to show understanding:

- children will be able to recognise smaller quantities in different arrangements, up to six objects, depending upon the ways in which they are arranged
- children will begin to recognise smaller quantities within a larger arrangement of marks or objects
- children will be confident in their approach and demonstrate resilience when regrouping larger quantities, visually, using their memory of familiar groups
- children will talk about the arrangements they can see and recognise
- children will talk about how they use the numbers they recognise and know how to break up larger quantities

Observation:

Evie said, **"I need another star sticker to match the three of hearts."**

Evaluation:

Evie instantly recognises two stars on the flashcard and added one more to make a pair (three of hearts and three stars).

Observation:

Leo started with too many pine cones and said, **"I just need three of them to be the same as the stones."**

Evaluation:

Leo knew how to break up the larger quantity and recognised how to match the three stones.

Observation:

Oliver saw four slices of pizza on the plate, but they were not all the same. **"Two of them are for me."**

Evaluation:

Oliver is able to instantly recognise the smaller number of slices (two) within a larger arrangement of four, identifying his favourite flavour.

Subitising – CREATE: What adults could do

- plan activities that encourage children to regroup objects from a larger group into smaller groups, to make regular and irregular arrangements, talking about recognisable quantities during the process



How do you think we should arrange the picnic so there is enough for each teddy?

I'm going to put four cakes on the stand and get four cups.

You can see enough cakes and cups for all the teddies.

Make connections

Uses talk to make links and notice patterns in their experiences

- seize opportunities during independent learning and encourage children to explore many different ways of arranging groups of quantities they recognise



This looks like a lovely picnic. How do you know there are enough cakes?

How can you check there are enough cups?

I put three cakes on the top and one on the bottom. That's four.

I put the cups in towers of two.

Two towers of two makes four cups.

Represent and communicate

Uses talk to connect ideas and describe what is happening

Review and evaluate

Behaviours a child could demonstrate to show understanding:

- children will meet their own challenges, using objects and mark-making tools to create familiar groupings
- children will begin to use their group-recognition skills to regroup numbers; for example, the children will recognise three conkers and count one more
- children will be able to explain how they identified small quantities

Observation:

Oliver drew the food on a seating plan with coloured crayons; **“Look – four carrots for each table.”**

Evaluation:

Oliver is mark making to create a familiar grouping of four.

Observation:

Leo said, **“The four oranges look like these.”** Leo showed the adult the four of clubs.

Evaluation:

Leo is able to explain how he knew there were four oranges.

Observation:

Evie said, **“That’s three fruit sticks. I just need one more.”**

Evaluation:

Evie is beginning to use her recognition of three to combine it with one and make four.

Essential foundations for counting

Devised and created by the Herts for Learning mathematics and Early Years educational specialists responsible for **ESSENTIALmaths** and **Places to Play Every Day**, the highly acclaimed teaching resources also available from Herts for Learning.

Places to Play Every Day, for 3- to 5-year-olds

Creating learning spaces to inspire, challenge and motivate children in the Early Years.

Places to Play Every Day sets out clear guidance on developing each area of provision, including information on the adult's role, resource ideas and skills to be taught in a variety of contexts.

"The **Places to Play Every Day** guidance and audits book provide ideas for new and experienced practitioners to develop their learning environment. The photographs included give a helpful visual representation of high quality EYFS provision."
EYFS Leader, Knutsford Primary School

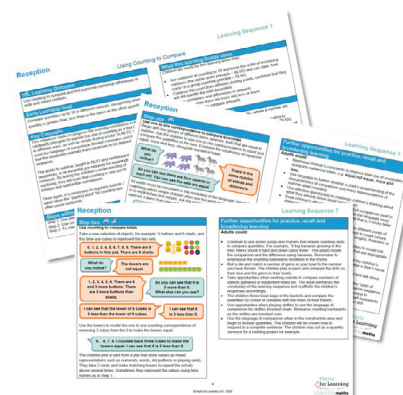


ESSENTIALmaths and Reception ESSENTIALmaths

The complete suite of Herts for Learning **ESSENTIALmaths** resources is an invaluable planning tool for teachers to find practical support and many resources, to improve the teaching of mathematics. The learning sequences are written to ensure pupils are able to master the learning and meet the challenges of an age-related curriculum.



"I know this has been said before but I can't stress how good **ESSENTIALmaths** for Reception has been for the strong grounding of number. We have seen a massive impact."
EYFS teacher, Aston St Mary's CofE Primary School



"The school's involvement in the Hertfordshire Essential Mathematics programme has supported the development of mathematics, by providing a clear teaching sequence to develop pupils' number fluency and reasoning at greater depth."
Ofsted Report, Field Manor JMI School, St. Albans (2018)

About Herts for Learning

Herts for Learning (HfL) is an award-winning provider of products and services to schools and educational settings within and outside Hertfordshire. We believe that every young person, through access to a great education, should be able to realise their potential, regardless of where they live or their circumstances. We focus on supporting the schools we work with to achieve successful long-term outcomes for their children. HfL is the UK's largest schools company, operates with a not-for-profit ethos and is majority owned by Hertfordshire schools. Since our inception in 2013, we have reinvested nearly £1million in activities that would not otherwise have attracted funding.

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