

Activities for Home

Dear Families,

At school we are learning to recognise up to 5 items without counting them. This is called 'subitising'. At school we are practising subitising small numbers of things, rather than counting them. This helps the children develop a good understanding of quantity. Here are some simple activities that you can do at home to support your child's learning:

Match my fingers

Hold out one hand, with some fingers showing and some bent. Ask your child to copy the pattern with their hand. Ask them how many fingers they are showing? Then ask your child to show a finger pattern for you to copy. You can start by showing easier fingers patterns like 3 in a row. When your child gets confident at copying and saying how many there are, you can start to miss out some fingers and show harder finger arrangements.

Catch a glimpse

Take ~10 small objects, such as pasta shells, balls of plasticine or bottle tops and put them in a central pile. Take up to 5 objects from the pile without your child seeing and hide them under a piece of paper. With your child watching, lift the paper for a couple of seconds and then replace it. Ask your child to tell you how many objects there were under the paper. Then ask them to take that number of objects from the pile in the middle. Then reveal your hidden objects. Have you both got the same number of things? You can count them to check. As you play this game ask your child to try to 'see' the amounts with their eyes (subitise) rather than count.

Roll and match

You will need a dice and some small objects such as pasta shells, as in the last game. If you don't have a dice you can draw dots on small pieces of paper, then pick a piece of paper. Your child throws the dice (or takes a piece of paper) and then takes the number of objects to match the number shown on the dice. Spend some time looking at the objects they are taking. Your child should start to be able to see if they have the right number by looking at them in their hand, rather than just counting them out. Then it is your turn to throw the dice. When you take the objects show them to your child. "I needed 4. Does that look like 4?"

Hop, jump, clap

Give your child physical activities to do, such as 3 hops by saying, "Can you hop ____ times," and showing 3 on your fingers. However when you say the number, rather than showing it on your fingers, your child has to freeze. Then give your child a go at giving you actions to do, sometimes showing the number on their fingers and sometimes saying the number. Can they catch you out? Remember, only do the actions when your child shows the number, not when they say it!

Talking Tip

There are lots of different games that you can play and activities that you can do to practise subitising. You don't need to stick to these suggestions. Just keep bringing the focus to recognising up to 5 items without counting and discussing the number of items you can see (or sounds you can hear). You can then count the items to check the number.