



EYFS Maths Skills Progression: Counting

Object Counting Skills - Progressing from 0-5, 0-10, 0-20.

Progression of Skills	Possible Misconceptions	Pedagogical Guidance
Use language associated with counting, such as "more", "a lot", "less".	Children can develop some confusion with opposites and forget which way to go.	Teach one word in isolation, such as "more", until the children are very confident with this, before moving onto "less". Use this language in practical contexts, such as snack time.
Subitise small amounts of objects arranged in a regular pattern, such as a dice pattern. Subitise small amounts of objects arranged in an irregular pattern.	Children may think the adult is expecting them to count. Children may try to subitise larger quantities and thus be unsuccessful.	Explain to children it is quicker not to count if they don't need to and that they do not need to count in ones to check if they can recognise small amounts. Encourage children to subitise by asking them to grab objects. For example, say "Grab three blocks."
Begin to develop one-to-one correspondence and say one number name for each object.	Children may not count each object or may count some objects more than once. They may say several number names when pointing at one object.	Asking the child to insert a word between the number names, such as one car, two cars, three cars will naturally slow down their count. Model counting like this yourself, first from one to three and then further.
Move or touch objects to count them.	Children may think objects need to be counted in a certain order, for example from left to right. Children may think that you can only start counting from number one.	Exaggerate your body gestures when modelling pointing or moving objects, to subtly draw attention to how you are counting. Use interesting pointers, such as a wand, flyswatter or a torch to increase engagement.
Can count things they can't touch or see, such as pictures on a wall or sounds. This is known as the abstraction principle.	Children may count each picture more than once.	Encourage children to be methodical - working from left to right or top to bottom. Start them with pictures that are roughly in line before moving to very random arrangements.

Progression of Skills	Possible Misconceptions	Pedagogical Guidance
<p>Know that when objects are moved, spread out or moved closer together that the total remains the same.</p>	<p>Children may think there is more of something when you spread them out and fewer when moved closer together.</p>	<p>Give the children lots of opportunities to count. Larger objects, smaller objects and a mixture. Put the objects into a box, spread them out, hold them in your hands etc.</p>
<p>Know that the last number they say represents the number of objects in a group. This is known as the cardinal principle.</p>	<p>Children may not yet have developed the concept of cardinality (that the last number they say is the number of objects in the set).</p>	<p>Model counting objects, emphasising the last number to be said and then follow up with the sentence, "The last number I said was five, so there are five cars."</p>
<p>Give someone a specified number of objects.</p> <p>Count out a specified number of objects from a larger group.</p>	<p>This is difficult for a child who does not yet understand cardinality. They may just point to the third object and say "that one" when asked questions, such as "Show me three" or "Give me three."</p>	<p>Model giving the child some objects, emphasising the final number of the count and say a sentence explaining what you have done.</p>
<p>Can count on when part of a set of objects is hidden.</p>	<p>Children may start again from one when the objects are hidden. This may be because they do not yet understand that the last number they said is the number of objects in a set.</p> <p>They may not be able to hold a number in their head.</p>	<p>Tap the hidden group and say the number for them. Say the next numbers in the count until they are able to join in.</p>