

The first few years of a child's life are especially important for mathematics development. Research shows that early mathematical knowledge predicts later reading ability and general education, and social progress. Conversely, children who start behind in mathematics tend to stay behind throughout their whole educational journey.

The objective for our staff working in Early Years is to ensure that all children develop firm mathematical foundations in a way that is engaging and appropriate for their age. The materials Bexton Primary School use are primarily designed to support EYFS children.

The materials are organised into key concepts (not individual objectives) underpinning many early mathematics curricula. The typical progression highlights the range of experiences (some of which may be appropriate for younger children), but the activities and opportunities could be developed across the Reception provision.

Six key areas of early mathematics learning collectively provide a platform for everything children will encounter as they progress through their maths learning at primary school and beyond.

The materials are based on the NCETM key areas of early mathematics learning.



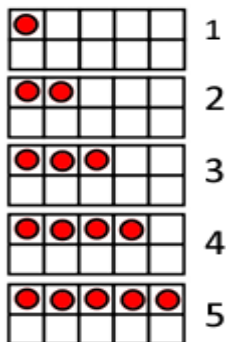
Progression

CARDINALITY & COUNTING

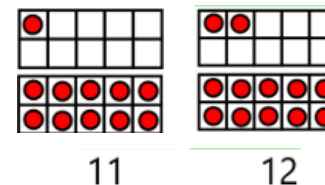
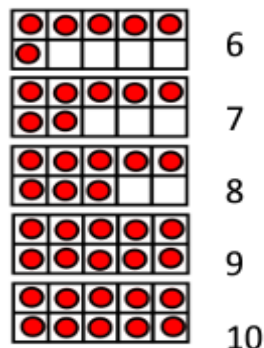
EGL Numerical Patterns

Children need to know number names, initially to five, then ten, and extending to larger numbers, including crossing boundaries 19/20 and 29/30. Counting back is a valuable skill, but young children will find this harder because of the demand it places on the working memory.

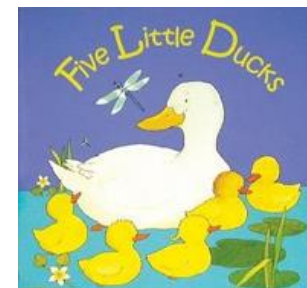
Know number names to 5, then 10.



Progress to larger numbers, including crossing 19/20 and 29/30



Counting backwards using number rhymes.



EGL Numerical Patterns

Children need lots of opportunities to count things in irregular arrangements. For example, how many play people are in the sandpit? How many cars have we got in the garage? These opportunities can also include counting things that cannot be seen, touched or moved.

Counting things of different sizes.



Counting things that cannot be moved



Counting things that cannot be seen (sounds, actions, words)



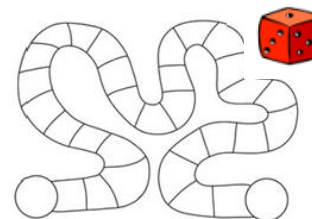
EGL Numerical Patterns

Children need the opportunity to count out or 'give' a number of things from a larger group, not just to count the number that are there. This is to support them in focusing on the 'stopping number', which gives the cardinal value.

Playing dice games to collect a number of things. e.g. 5 nice things game.



Playing track games and counting along the track.



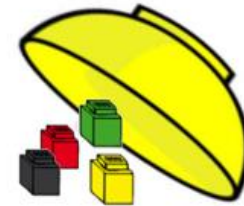
Progression

CARDINALITY & COUNTING

ELG Number

Subitising is recognising how many things are in a group without having to count them one by one. Children need opportunities to see regular arrangements of small quantities, e.g. a dice face, structured manipulatives, etc., and be encouraged to say the quantity represented. Children also need opportunities to recognise small amounts (up to five) when they are not in the 'regular' arrangement, e.g. small handfuls of objects.

Using dot cards, dominoes and dice as part of a game, including irregularly arranged dots (e.g. stuck on)



'All at once fingers' - show me four fingers.



Playing hidden object games where objects are revealed for a few seconds; for example, small toys hidden under bowl - shuffle them, lift the bowl briefly and ask how many there were.

ELG Number

Children need to have the opportunity to match a number symbol with a number of things. Look for opportunities to have a range of number symbols available, e.g. wooden numerals, calculators, and handwritten (include different examples of a number).

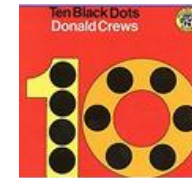
Using numeral dice in games; matching numerals with varied groups of things.



Using 'tidy-up labels' on containers and checking that nothing is missing.



Reading number books.



Putting the right number of snacks on a tray for the number of children shown on a card.

ELG Number

Children need the opportunity to recognise amounts that have been rearranged and to generalise that if nothing has been added or taken away, then the amount is the same.

Correcting a puppet who may say that there are more or fewer objects now, as they have been moved around, e.g. spread out or pushed together.



Contexts include sharing things out (grouping them in different ways) and then the puppet complaining that it is unfair as they have less.



Encouraging the children to make different patterns with a given number of things.



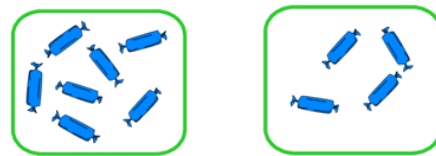
Progression

COMPARISON

EGL Numerical Patterns

Children need progressive experiences where they can compare collections and begin to talk about which group has more things. Initially, the groups need to be very obviously different, with one group having a widely different number of things. Collections should also offer challenges, such as including more small things and fewer large things, to draw attention to the numerosity of the comparison, i.e. the number of things, not the size of them.

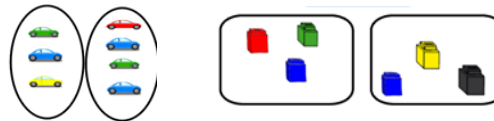
Collections for children to sort and compare, which include objects which are identical and which include objects of different kinds or sizes.



Collections with a large number of things and collections with a small number of things.

EGL Numerical Patterns

Children need the opportunity to see that groups could consist of equal numbers of things. Children can check that groups are equal by matching objects on a one-to-one basis.



Ensuring that when providing groups to compare, there are some that have an equal amount.



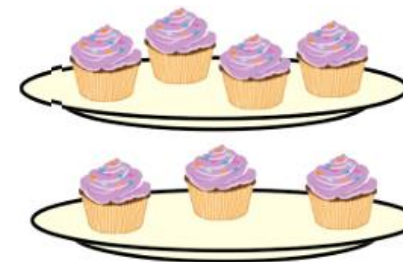
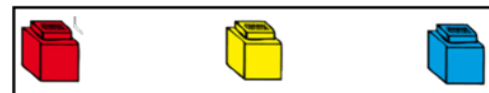
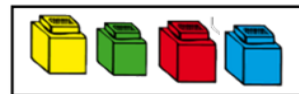
Ask the children to convert two unequal groups into two that have the same number, e.g. 'There are 6 apples in one bag and 2 in another bag; can we make the bags equal for the two hungry horses?'



EGL Numerical Patterns

Children need opportunities to apply their understanding by comparing actual numbers and explaining which is more. For example, a child is shown two boxes and told one has 5 sweets in and the other has 3 sweets in. Which box would they pick to keep and why? Look for the reasoning in the response they give, i.e. 'I would pick the 5 box because 5 is more than 3, and I want more.' If shown two numerals, children can say which is larger by counting, or matching one-to-one. Children can compare numbers that are far apart, near to and next to each other. For example, 8 is a lot bigger than 2, but 3 is only a little bit bigger than 2.

Explaining unfair sharing - 'This one has more because it has 5 and that one only has 3'



Comparing numbers that are far apart, near to, and next to each other.

Progression

EGL Numerical Patterns

Children need opportunities to see and begin to generalise the 'one more than/one less than' relationship between sequential numbers. They can apply this understanding by recognising when the quantity does not match the number, i.e. if a pack is labelled as 5 but contains only 4, the children can identify that this is not right. Support children in recognising that if they add one, they will get the next number, or if one is taken away, they will have the previous number. For example: 'There are 4 frogs on the log, 1 frog jumps off. How many will be left? How do you know?'

Labelling groups with the correct numeral. Do children spot the error if a group is mislabelled? For example, 'The label on the pot says 4 and we have 5 - what do we need to do?' A child may say, 'We need to take one out because we have one too many.'



5



4



3

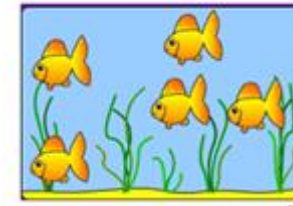


2

COMPARISON



Ensure children focus on the numerosity of the group by having items in the collection of different kinds and sizes.



3

Making predictions about what the outcome will be in stories, rhymes and songs if one is added to or if one is taken away.

5 currant buns in the baker shop...



Progression

ELG Number

Children need opportunities to see small numbers within a larger collection. 'Number talks' allow children to discuss what they see. For instance, with giant ladybirds: 'There are 5 spots altogether. I can see 4 and 1, I can see 3 and 2, and I can see 1 and 1 and 1 and 1 and 1.' Encourage exploration of all the ways that 'five' can be and look. Children are encouraged to look closely at numbers to see what else they can see. This reinforces the concept of conservation.

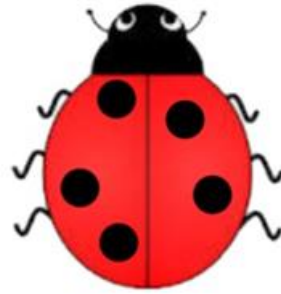
EGL Numerical Patterns

Children need opportunities to partition a number of things into two groups and to recognise that those groups can be recombined to make the same total. Encourage children to say the whole number that the 'parts' make altogether.

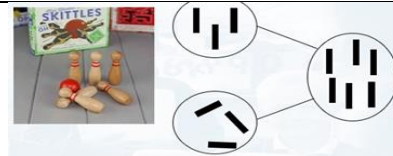
ELG Number

Children need opportunities to explore various ways to partition a whole number. The emphasis here is on identifying the pairs of numbers that make a total. Children can do this in two ways - physically separating a group or constructing a group from two kinds of things. Making a number with two different kinds of things. For example, make a fruit skewer with five pieces of fruit, using bowls of bananas/strawberries to choose from; then, ask the children to describe how they have made theirs. They should compare it with a partner's: 'What is the same about your skewers? What is different?'

COMPOSITION



Encouraging making arrangements with (e.g.) ten; ensuring the children talk about the different arrangements they can see within the whole.

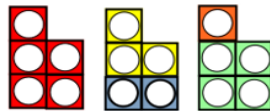


Exploring songs; for example, 'Five Currant Buns' - show that the whole is still five, but some are in the shop, and some have been taken away; check throughout that there are still five currant buns.



Playing skittles and looking at how many are standing. How many have fallen over? How many are there altogether?

Numicon towers: layering up Numicon pieces of the same total.



Putting things into two containers in different ways.

Bunny Ears



Spill the Beans: using double-sided counters or beans, where one side is coloured, throw the collection and note how many of each type can be seen and how many altogether.



Using six bean bags with different fabric on each side, throw the collection and note how many of each type can be seen.

Progression

EGL Numerical Patterns

Children need opportunities to explore the different ways that numbers can be partitioned, i.e. into more than two groups. Situations to promote this include increasing the number of pots to put a given amount into three or more pots.



Role play, e.g. in a toy shop, ten toys need arranging onto the three shelves. How will you organise them?

Having more than two places to sort things into in any given context, e.g. arranging characters in the small-world play in different locations.

COMPOSITION



Games such as 'Posh Ducks' (Griffiths, R., Back, J. & Gifford, S. (2016) Making Numbers: Using manipulatives to teach arithmetic, OUP): using a set number of ducks, for example ten in three different locations (nest, water, decking), roll the dice and make one group match the amount shown without adding or taking any away.

ELG Number

Children need opportunities to say how many are hidden in a known number of things. For example: 'Five toys go into a tent, then two come out. How many are left in the tent?' The child should respond that there are still three toys in the tent.

Playing hiding games with a number of objects in a box, under a cloth, in a tent, in a cave, etc.



Utilising classroom routines such as tidy-up time to identify how many are still missing from a pot with a number label.

Progression

PATTERN

Children need the opportunity to see a pattern, to talk about what they can see, and to continue a pattern. At first, they will do this one item at a time, e.g. red cube, blue cube, red cube... verbalising the pattern helps. Children may then be asked to say what they would add next to continue it.



Building towers or trains of different-coloured cubes (continuing patterns horizontally and vertically).



Extending patterns using a wide range of identical objects in different colours, e.g. beads, small plastic toys such as bears, dinosaurs, and vehicles. Avoid interlocking cubes or bead threading so children can focus on the pattern rather than their coordination skills.

Copying a pattern can be difficult for children if they have to keep comparing item by item. AB patterns are easiest – when presented to children, these should contain several repeats to ensure that the pattern unit is evident. Discuss the nature of the pattern: how has the pattern been made? Patterns can have various features, such as varying objects, sizes or orientations.

Accessing a range of patterns to copy. For example, using the plastic bears: big, small, big, small, big... footwear: shoe, welly, shoe, welly..., actions and sounds: jump, twirl, jump, twirl, jump... or clap, stamp, clap, stamp...



Collecting things in the outdoor environment: leaf, stick, leaf, stick...



As children progress from continuing to copying patterns, they can be challenged to change the sample pattern or to create their own. A range of objects can be provided for children to decide what the features of the pattern are going to be. Children may find it easier to make a pattern with the same colours as the original but with different objects. For example, copying a red-blue cube pattern with red and blue dinosaurs is easier than with yellow and green cubes. Patterns can involve different aspects and modes, such as sounds, words or actions: some children will need suggestions, while others will think of their own.

Challenging the child to change one element of the pattern they have created, e.g. 'Can you change the red bear to a blue bear? What is the pattern now?'



Ensuring that there are numerous opportunities to create patterns – e.g. in the outdoors, using natural materials such as sticks, leaves, stones, pine cones; in craft activities, using stamping, sticking, printing; with musical instruments, using sounds such as drums, shakers, triangles, etc.

Working collaboratively with a friend to take turns to create a pattern, e.g. one claps, one stamps, or one gets the red bear, one gets the yellow bear, etc.



Challenging a friend to continue or copy their pattern.



Progression

Children also need opportunities to spot and correct errors when working with AB patterns. It is easiest to spot an extra item, then a missing item, and then items swapped around. When presented with an AB pattern, children can be encouraged to describe it to ensure it is correct. Then, they can track the pattern from the start to detect an error. To begin with, children may know something is wrong but might need help to say what the error is. They then might take several attempts to correct it before being able to repair the error in one move.

The key aspect of understanding patterns is identifying the smallest part of the pattern, or the 'unit of repeat'. You can draw children's attention to this when building patterns by picking up a unit at a time, e.g. a blue block and a red block together, and describing this as a 'redblue pattern', rather than a red, blue, red, blue, red, blue pattern. Children can also be asked to show the pattern unit that repeats, e.g., two blocks, a red and a blue.

Children who have only experienced alternating ABC patterns may state that patterns such as ABBC are not patterns, as you cannot have two of the same colour next to each other. This highlights that children need lots of experience with various pattern types, so early misconceptions do not form about what makes a pattern. When working on continuing these patterns, children should be encouraged to focus on the unit of repeat, e.g. 'I see you are making a red, blue, green pattern'. Ensure that children repeat the pattern at least three times and are encouraged to describe and say how they would continue.

PATTERN



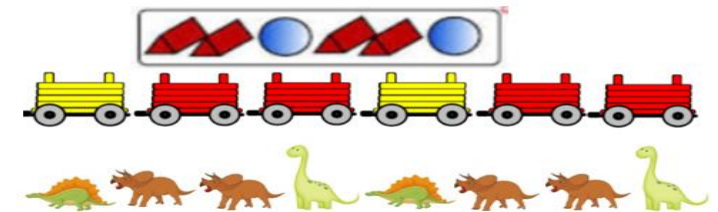
Presenting patterns with deliberate errors, including extra, missing and swapped items, e.g. red cube, blue cube, red cube, blue cube, red cube, red cube, blue cube – identifying there is an extra item and fixing it by removing the extra red cube, putting in an extra blue cube, or swapping the final cubes.



Asking the children to make a pattern with a deliberate mistake and challenging a friend to spot it.



Building towers or trains of different-coloured cubes (continuing patterns horizontally and vertically).



Extending patterns using a wide range of identical objects in different colours, e.g. beads, small plastic toys such as bears, dinosaurs and vehicles.

Progression

As children work on patterns involving more elements, they can be challenged to continue patterns which do not end after a whole unit of repeat. Provide experiences where the given pattern stops mid-unit.

Repeat the unit at least three times (big bear, small bear, medium bear; big bear, small bear, medium bear; big bear, small bear, medium bear). This ensures that the pattern can be sustained over a longer duration.

Make a specified pattern, e.g. 'Can you do a green, yellow, or blue pattern?' This is to ensure the child can apply their pattern understanding.

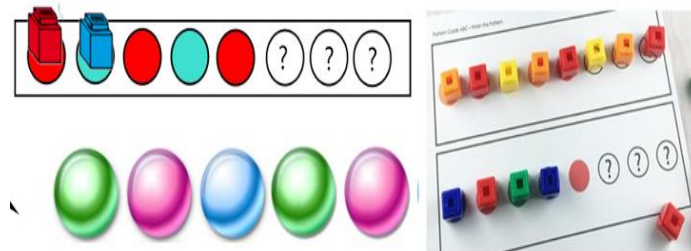
Choose their own rule, e.g. 'I am going to make a big, small, small pattern.' This ensures the child can identify pattern features/rules/criteria.

Choose their own actions or sounds, e.g. clap, stamp, twirl... This is to support children in generalising pattern structures.

When working with ABB patterns, children also need opportunities to spot and correct errors. It is easiest to spot an extra item, then a missing item, and then items swapped around. When presented with an ABB pattern, children can be encouraged to describe it to ensure it is correct. Then, they can track the pattern from the start to detect an error. To begin with, children may know something needs to be fixed but might not be able to say what the error is. They then might take several attempts to correct it before being able to repair the error in one move.

PATTERN

Providing a range of patterns – physical and on cards – that children can continue • ensuring that the patterns offered have different structures and end after a complete or a partial unit.



Utilising a range of items in the environment to create patterns such as interlocking cubes and toys, e.g. links, elephants, and camels.



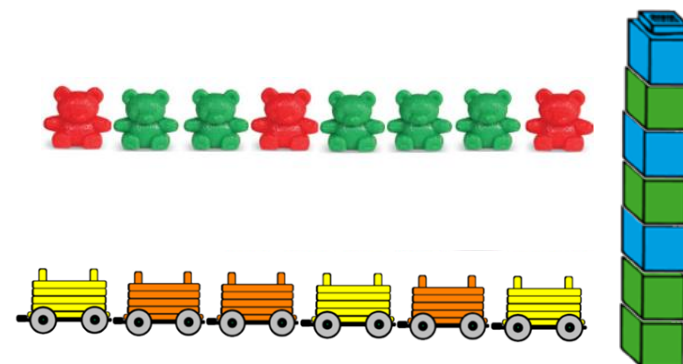
Exploring and creating patterns on peg boards with fruit (e.g. fruit kebabs), musical instruments, movements and dance sequences.



Presenting patterns with deliberate errors.

Once children have fixed the pattern, encourage them to check the 'fix' by tracking the pattern.

Asking the children to make a pattern with a deliberate mistake and challenge a friend to spot it.



Progression

As children become more experienced with patterns continuing, -extending and -creating, encourage them to record the patterns that they make. Initially, these might be straightforward representations, but over time these recordings may become more iconic, e.g. a red dot representing the red dinosaur, a squiggle or the letter R for the red dinosaur. As this progresses, encourage the children to symbolise their patterns in various ways and use these symbols to continue the practice to demonstrate their understanding.

As children gain experience in symbolising patterns, they develop their experience of pattern structure. As they identify the unit of repeat and express it, they will be able to use this knowledge to create a pattern in a different medium which follows the same structure.

You may ask them to describe the pattern, what comes next, what the rule is for their pattern, etc. If a child can do this confidently, they could be asked to recreate the same pattern rule with different objects.

As children become more experienced with the structures of patterns, they can investigate whether patterns can continue indefinitely in a circle. Linking elephants and camels or making a necklace can provoke discussion about this. You then might lead discussions about whether the pattern works and how you can tell. If it doesn't work, can children explain why, and correct it, so it does? Circles allow children to adjust the circle size to add or take out items.

PATTERN

Including the following phrasing in discussion and dialogue: 'This is a red-blue pattern; this/that; I call it an A (one of these) then a B (one of those).'



Constructing patterns with actions and developing symbols to show the pattern and to provide 'instructions' for someone else to follow the pattern.

Inviting friends to copy the pattern from the symbols.



Providing a range of experiences where children can create a pattern using a coding structure.

Ensuring children can follow the patterns they have coded.



Making circular patterns such as necklaces, and circles linking elephants or camels.

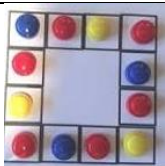
Using pre-given circles to create a border, such as on or around a paper plate.

Exploring which patterns work, which don't, and why

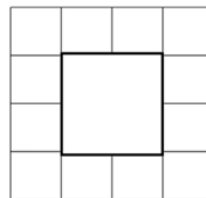


Progression

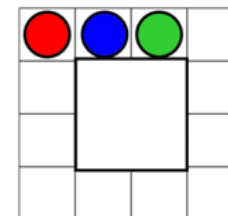
This is where the children explore creating a pattern around a given space. In these activities, children have the additional challenge of recognising if their pattern can 'work' – fit into the given space. It is useful to include indoor and outdoor spaces, e.g. creating an outdoor reading area and defining it with a border of carpet tiles. Children can create a pattern on the carpet tiles with cubes to see if their pattern works, e.g. one coloured cube per tile.



Creating borders around defined spaces in the learning environment, i.e. a garden for the teddy bears, an outdoor reading area, etc.



Encouraging children to predict if the pattern could 'keep going', voting on this and discussing their thoughts and reasons with a partner.



As children become pattern experts, they look for opportunities to spot and study environmental patterns. These patterns could be in construction, fabric, wrapping paper, wallpaper, etc. Look for opportunities to identify the unit of repeat and explain how it repeats. Consider other patterns, such as growth patterns, extending a cross shape, or spotting 'staircase' patterns of numbers going up in ones or twos. Children may make and spot spatial patterns, for example, reflecting shapes or reversing an image. Stories and rhymes present a good opportunity to explore a growing pattern, e.g. 'There was an Old Lady who Swallowed a Fly' or 'A Squash and a Squeeze'. Explore representing these diagrammatically – to see a staircase pattern, for example.



Exploring patterns in stories, songs and rhymes.



Represent these diagrammatically to support pattern-spotting and predict what will happen next and why.



Inviting children to spot patterns in the home environment, or bring in examples from home.



Looking at fabric patterns from different cultural traditions: discussing the patterns in terms of what stays the same and what is different.

They are designing wrapping paper for a specific event that involves creating a pattern which the children can describe.



Progression

In this first stage, children are able to recognise the specific attributes of (for example) length – that a stick is long; adults are tall. Their initial recognition may be a descriptor and over-applied (all straight things are long, and if it is not straight, it cannot be long; all adults are tall). Children may use gestures or words to start to compare amounts of continuous quantities (length, capacity, weight), pointing to items that are big, tall, full or heavy. Children learn this vocabulary from the adults around them. Adults can seek opportunities to extend and refine conversations about things that are long, tall, high, heavy, full, etc., rather than just 'big'. At this point, children may not be using comparative language such as, 'You are taller than me.'

Children can find something that is longer/shorter or heavier/lighter than a given reference item. They will utilise strategies such as direct comparison, e.g. placing objects side by side to determine which is longer. Children compare sizes, lengths, weights and capacities verbally and begin to use more specific terms, such as 'taller than', 'heavier than', 'lighter than', and 'holds more than', as well as more general comparative phrases, such as 'not enough', 'too much', and a lot more. When comparing lengths directly, children need to ensure that they align the starting points, and compare like-for-like, e.g. straightening skipping ropes, before comparing lengths.

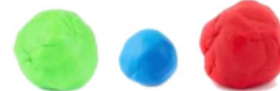
MEASURES



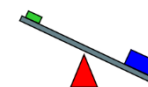
tall long small
heavy big full
short high empty



Which one do you think is the odd one out?
Why? How will we check? Were we right?



Cutting a piece of ribbon as long as a
child's arm and encouraging them to find
things in the environment that are longer,
shorter or the same length.



What can we do to make this side
of the see-saw go down?

Comparing different parcels,
ensuring some of the smaller
parcels are heavy, and some of
the larger parcels are light.



I wonder whose
pot will hold the
most water?' 'I
wonder which
ball is the
heaviest?



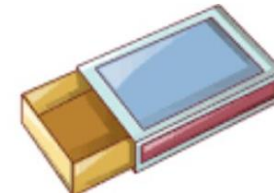
Progression

After children have had lots of practical experiences comparing attributes, they can begin to estimate and predict. For instance, they can start considering which container would best store a specific item, 'Which box should Teddy have?', 'What will fit in here?'

Children can then move on to using one thing to compare with two others if, for example, asked to put things in order of height, weight or capacity. This may involve using a 'go between', for instance, pouring a jugful of water into two bottles to see which holds more. Problems may be posed, such as: 'I would like to move this table outside - do you think it will fit through the door?'

MEASURES

Making a bed for a teddy using blocks.



Dressing dolls, and selecting different-sized clothes.

Finding things that will fit inside a matchbox.



Selecting a box or container to store a specific item.



Making 'Russian doll'-type sets of nesting boxes from a collection.



Packing a shopping bag, making sure the lightest items do not get squashed by heavier things.



Finding which of three pairs of shoes is heaviest for packing in a rucksack.



Progression

Before children use standard units of measure, they begin to compare units of different sizes in practical contexts. One example may be in the water tray, where children realise it will take them longer to fill a bucket using teaspoons than bottles. Another example would be to fill identical containers with different-sized objects, e.g. small balls or large balls. These sorts of playful experiences enable children to make the generalisation that the smaller the unit, the more we need of them, or the bigger the unit, the less we need of them. These experiences can be extended by encouraging estimations: 'How many tennis balls do you think will fit in this tub?' Then check this by filling it. 'What if I try to fill it with ping pong balls? Will our answer stay the same? If not, why not?'

Experiences can be provided where children use units to 'measure' and compare. It is better to provide identical bricks, centimetre cubes or metre sticks so they can count physical units, rather than repeating the use of one item as with using hands or feet. In order to measure accurately, they need to ensure there are no gaps between units of measure. Using standard units helps children make connections with measuring in 'real life'. Young children also enjoy using height charts, measuring tapes, rulers, digital scales and timers, although will not yet fully understand how they work.

MEASURES

Setting up an Estimation Station and guessing how many things are in the jar each day.



Making biscuits from a given amount of dough – choosing cutters to see who will make the most biscuits.



Choosing from a selection of spoons, ladles, etc, to see who can fill their pot the quickest with rice. How do you know who will be quickest?



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Setting up a 'filling station' with lots of different-sized containers to fill with beads, then comparing capacities.

Using metre sticks to see if an elephant or dinosaur would fit in the room.

Measuring the growth of a beanstalk or sunflower with interlocking centimetre cubes.



Comparing the capacity of different bottles by filling lots of glasses.



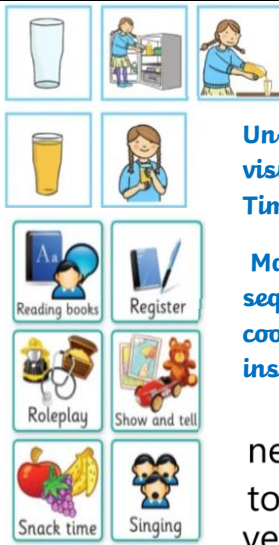
Using large bricks to measure the height of individuals.

Progression

Time is an abstract aspect to measure and is tricky in a range of ways. Although their age may be the most familiar number they know, children may have little sense of the unit of a 'year', and few may know the date of their birthday. In order to tell the time, children need a sense of numbers, space and time, the ability to count, and some notion of fractions (for half and quarter hours). In the Early Years, we begin by drawing children's attention to the sequencing of activities, important times in their day, and some sequences of time that are significant to them.

Children need to experience specific time spans in order to start to develop an overall sense of time. Initially, this may be based on familiar activities such as the number of 'sleep' before an event. A class calendar may support this by highlighting certain events ('How many sleeps until the chicks start to hatch?', 'How many sleeps until my birthday?', 'How many sleeps until we go to the park?'). Discuss the number of sleeps getting smaller and what this means. By using timers in play, children can start to explore what they can do in a certain time period. For example: 'I wonder how long it takes you to run around the track?', 'How would we know if you were getting quicker?'. Identify that, in this case, the smaller the number of seconds, the quicker you are getting (this is tricky for a child, as usually bigger numbers are 'better').

MEASURES



Un-muddling visual Timetables.

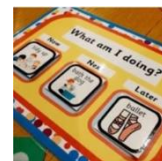
Making picture sequences for cooking instructions.

next tomorrow
today before
yesterday after

Making picture sequences for cooking instructions. Describing sequences by re-telling stories.

Discussing 'o'clock' times at registration, lunchtime, snack time, tidy-up time, etc...

Making their own timetable for a day - selecting activities and ordering them.



Events on a class calendar to count down to.



Time durations with songs or music.



Timers provided for children to set and respond to challenges; e.g. 'I wonder if we can run as fast as a cheetah', 'I wonder how many hops I can do in ten seconds', 'I wonder how many times I can write my name in a minute', etc



Progression

Children need opportunities to move both themselves and objects around, so they see things from different perspectives. This will support them in visualising how things will appear when turned around and imagining how things might fit together. They need to make constructions, patterns and pictures, and select shapes which will fit when rotated or flipped in insert boards, shape sorters and jigsaws. These experiences will support them in noticing the results of rotating and reflecting images, and in visualising these.

Children need opportunities to be exposed to and to use the language of position and direction: position: 'in', 'on', 'under' direction: 'up', 'down', and 'across'. Children also need opportunities to use terms which are relative to the viewpoint: 'in front of', 'behind', 'forwards', and 'backwards' ('left' and 'right' to be used later on as ideas develop). Create as many opportunities as possible to explore this language, taking advantage of play in the outdoors to explore sequences of body movements (following obstacle courses, directing a friend, etc.).

Shape & Space



Riding trikes around interesting routes.
Construction activities.
Printing and making pictures and patterns with shapes.
Jigsaws.



Posting boxes.

Making a complete circuit with a train track.

Tangrams: 'Can you make a person with the shapes?'

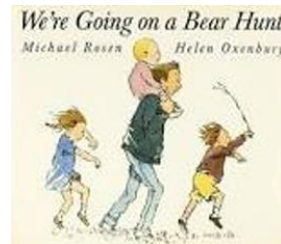


Acting out their own versions of well-known stories where characters negotiate routes and obstacles, for example 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'



Hunting for hidden objects, with some prompts, e.g. 'Look behind the bicycle store, take three steps from the front of the art cupboard.

Developing and talking about small-world scenarios, e.g. doll's house, miniature village, play park.



Progression

Through play – particularly in construction – children have lots of opportunities to explore shapes, and the attributes of particular shapes, and to select shapes to fulfil a particular need. Support this exploration by discussing items built by children in terms of how towers are built and why certain shapes are chosen to make a tower and the space that has been created within an enclosure. Ask: 'How did you make that tower?', 'Why were those blocks good ones to use?'



Shape & Space



Construction with structured and unstructured materials.
Making dens with varied materials outdoors.

Small world play and model building provide lots of opportunities for children to describe things being 'in front of', 'behind', 'on top of' etc., and to consider objects from different perspectives. Drawing representations of these relationships is a further challenge. These drawings may include a simple representation of a three-dimensional object from a different viewpoint. For example, 'can you draw your construction from above, looking down on it?'



Drawing or making a simple map of a route with 'landmarks', e.g. houses and trees.

Designing a plan for a garden or play area, using a small tray with sand, twigs, building bricks, etc.



Following a simple map of an excursion.



Progression

Children need opportunities to construct and create things that represent objects in their environment. As they do this, they should notice the shape properties of the object that they want to represent; encourage them to think about the appropriateness of the shapes they choose. Examples of this may include representing a ball as a circle, building a train from wooden rectangular blocks, or using a curved block for the elephant's trunk.

At this stage, children show increasing intentionality in their selection of shapes, for example, using cylinders to represent wheels because they can roll. Draw children's attention to specific properties by using specific language in everyday situations, while children may use informal language. Properties may include:

- curvedness
- numbers of sides and corners (2D) or edges, faces and vertices (3D)
- equal sides • parallel sides
- angle size, including right angles
- • 2D shapes as faces of 3D shapes.

Shape & Space



Making pictures with found materials, as well as structured shapes and blocks.



Stories as a prompt for creating representations, e.g. building a house for the three bears.

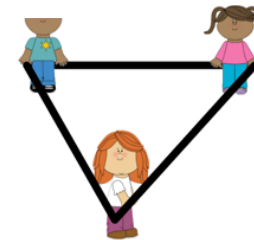


Making an insect hotel - selecting tube-like shapes from a collection of varied materials, some not fit for purpose.



Creating an extended channel for water to flow from a high container to a low one, some distance away.

Asking questions, for example: 'What shapes can you make with three people inside a loop of string? What about with four people?' 'What is the same and what is different about these?'



Progression

As children construct, and appear to be utilising, the properties of shapes, informally ask them about their constructions and representations. Children may use comparisons such as 'ball-shaped' or 'house-shaped', or start to discriminate between shapes, e.g. a 'fat' triangle and a 'pointy' triangle, using informal language. With shapes such as triangles and rectangles, ensure that children are used to seeing a range of examples, and the same shape in different orientations, as well as different sizes, colours and materials.



As children become more confident with specific shapes, encourage them to spot shapes within shapes. You might talk about small triangles making a bigger triangle or identifying 2D faces of 3D shapes. Pattern blocks are a useful resource, since children can point out the shapes they have used to make their whole pattern:



Also encourage children to predict what will happen when paper is cut or folded, or shapes are combined. Ask: 'What shapes will we see?', 'What will happen if we fold the square.'

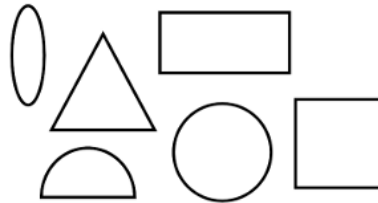
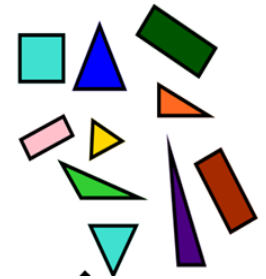
Shape & Space



Covering objects in foil and inviting children to justify their guesses about what is inside.



Making arrangements with a selection of different rectangles, including squares.



Choosing 2D shapes to construct a 3D model, e.g. using triangles and rectangles to make a tent.



Making decorations by folding and cutting.

Making 3D shapes using interlocking shapes.

