

# Activity Ideas

## Number Trays

E0269

### Making Maths Magical through Play

“Let them feel maths in their fingers before you ask them to hold it in their heads”.

Children will enjoy collecting and counting objects in these beautifully crafted tactile Number Trays. Ideal for exploring counting, number bonds and mathematical language of more than and less than.

Keeping mathematics physical and real for as long as possible is so important.

Make it sparkly and twinkly, make it squidgy and smelly, make it natural and textured. Let children use real things and lots of them. Let them hold them, move them, squish them, smell them, describe them and yes, count them. Doing the same thing in lots and lots of different ways, using all the senses, will build a strong sense of number: the awesome one, the tantalizing two, the thunderous three, the fabulous four!

These activities all use the **Learn Well Number Trays**.

### Collecting Treasures

Go collecting sticks and stones, pinecones and seashells, flowers and leaves. Let each child have their own Number Tray. As they collect say “four” sticks/leaves/stones, etc. Let them put their treasures on a table; so that eventually they will have a collection of lots of different “fours”. Or each child can collect different things in all nine Number Trays. You can then make a lovely display.

You could take a photograph of each child’s favourite collection and make your own natural number line that the children will relate to.





### Extend the activity:

- ★ Ask them to look for their number...four legs on a table, four petals on a flower, four buttons on my coat, etc.
- ★ Talk about one more, one less. Which of their friends has the one more tray, so five? Who has one less?
- ★ Talk about size. Find four tiny, miniscule, minute things. Find four big, huge, massive things. Talk about the different words we might use instead of big and small.
- ★ Talk about same and different. Find four things that are the same. What makes them the same? Size, colour, pattern?
- ★ Find four things that are different. What makes them different?



### Squishy, Smelly Maths

Using scented play dough and cutters; let each child roll out shapes and put them in their tray. Encourage them to make 'cakes' by piling up the shapes and maybe put a bead or pebble or star on top. Who can make the tallest/prettiest/wobbliest cake? Each additional layer gives more opportunity for counting.

Using scented play dough fill each tray with play dough and then squish loose parts into it. Pebbles, seashells, buttons, beads, pasta and more. Pushing them in and pulling them out is





such a lovely way to build those fine motor skills as well as a love of maths.

You could ask children to collect things that are the same colour as their play dough too.

## Marvelous Mark Making

Ask children to trace the numeral with their finger.

Fill the tray with chai seeds, flour or rice and using their finger or a twig, ask the children to copy their numeral in the tray.

Using loose parts (beads, rice, pebbles) fill the numeral. Use fingers (easy) or tweezers (harder). Great for fine motor skills.

## That's My Number!

Using scented play dough, squished into their Number Tray, ask the children to copy their numeral using loose parts. Squish the pebbles or sparkly beads into the play dough. Take a photograph of each and make a number line. Pull out the loose parts and look at the marks they have made; can they still see their number?

## One more! One less!

Use a collection of loose parts – wooden pieces, felt balls, buttons, etc. Place one Number Tray on the table, for example, 6. Ask the children to put six objects into the tray. Then ask them to add 'one more'. How many have they got now? Can they find the 7 number tray? Move all the objects into the 7 number tray. Then ask them to add 'one more'. And so, on until they get to 9.

- ★ Play it again using a different starting point.
- ★ Play it again but this time ask for 'one less'.

## Get talking – useful words:

one more	quantity	copy
one less	add	big
quantity	subtract	small
same	double	huge
different	halve	enormous
count	trace	minute



Encourage children to take a mindful moment