

Spotlight 5: a learning check

Can only begin counting at one; inaccurately counts objects when rearranged; has no consistent recognition of small numbers of objects; lacks systematic approaches

Opportunity for: explaining and discussing

Chink chink

Time 5–15 minutes

Resources

- Two jars or tins
- Small hard items such as 1p coins or draught pieces
- Large book or screen
- At least two children

Check: does the child use key vocabulary?

- | | |
|------------|-------|
| how many? | more |
| count on | fewer |
| count back | same |
| tally | check |

Teaching activity

‘This game, **Chink chink**, will help you with your counting.’

Choose numbers to suit your children. Perhaps numbers up to about five or seven would be best for some children. Use above ten, if appropriate.

Set up the two jars behind a large book propped up so that you can see the jars but the children can’t.

Children can cooperate to play the game, or you can play so that the child who calls out the correct number first is the winner. (Playing in the hall or playground so they can shout tends to make the game more fun.)

How to play

1. Drop some 1p coins one by one into each jar so that each jar contains the same number. (Less experienced children might need to see them and count them.)
2. With the jars out of sight, add a few items to the jars (showing your hands and showing or saying how many you are adding), for example one penny to one jar (making a satisfying ‘chink’ as it goes in) and three to the other jar.
3. You point to one of the jars and ask ‘how many?’ and the children must call out the total. (Some children might need to see the pennies to check the total they shout.)

Variations

- Just add coins to one jar at a time and ask how many. (It can help to encourage the child to tally one mark for each sound.)
- If you add coins to both jars you can use various questions to develop mathematical vocabulary.

? Are there more pennies in this jar or in this jar? How do you know?

- Extend the game by using larger numbers, and you might want to take some out of a jar as well as putting some in before asking how many.
- Dropping the coins irregularly makes it more difficult to count accurately.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this set of activities children should be able to:

- tackle related learning tasks with increased motivation and confidence;

- use and understand connected mathematical vocabulary;
- count confidently forwards and back in ones to thirty, one hundred, one thousand and beyond;
- count and tally using one number word for each 'step';
- count on from any number and not need to go back to one each time;
- know the last number in the count is the number of objects in the set;
- count irregular sounds;
- know the number remains the same however the objects are grouped;
- know not to count any objects twice;
- count objects without touching them;
- count objects starting in the middle;
- count a large number of objects reliably using a range of suitable problem-solving strategies to ensure they count correctly;
- estimate reasonably accurately and know how to check a count.