

Nature Numbers



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Preschoolers
2.5 - 4 years

Nature and being outside provides children with endless possibilities to use it in many different ways. Painting with leaves and sticks, throwing rocks in a lake and looking for bugs under logs all spark children's curiosity and creative side, but how do you bring math into the equation of the great outdoors?

Learning Outcomes

Domain:

Cognitive

Indicator:

Using objects to represent numbers

Skills:

Collecting and Organizing Information



Materials

- Paper
- Markers
- Table
- Rocks, shells, wood pieces,
- sticks, leaves, etc.



Instructions

Step 1: Start by making your number cards and laying them out on a flat table. You'll want to have fairly large number cards for each number for children to easily see. For each number card, write the number in a large font on one side and place it in a spot on your table.

Step 2: Repeat the step above for numbers 1-10. Space out all the cards on a flat table for the child to see ensuring there is adequate space (about 8 inches) between each number card.

Step 3: Encourage your child to go out and find objects to represent each number. For example: one rock to represent the number 1, two sticks to represent the number two, three red leaves to represent the number 3, etc.

Step 4: Once all the outdoor materials have been collected for each number, place them beside each number so the child can easily touch and count each object.



Age Adjustments

For older preschoolers: Older preschoolers will love collecting and counting the objects they find. If time and resources allow, have each child create their own nature numbers set. Did anyone choose the same objects from outside?

For younger toddlers: Younger children may recognize the numbers on the number cards but may have a more challenging time counting the objects. Assist with counting by taking their finger and have them touch each object and say the number out loud.



Playful Questions

- Can we sort our sticks for number 5 from largest to smallest?
- Did you find anything interesting when picking up your objects?
- Do any of the objects you found look like any of the numbers on our papers?
- What was the hardest number of objects to find?
- How many objects did we find in total?