

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Understanding subitising

Subitising is the ability to look at a small group of objects and know how many there are without counting. We can do this with very small quantities and this skill develops from a very early age.

Here are some top tips to help develop your understanding of subitising.



- Look at the educational programme for mathematics within the EYFS. It states, '*children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers*'. By supporting children's subitising skills you will support a deeper understanding of number as they link quantities with number names
- Refer to Development Matters and Birth to 5 Matters guidance, which both contain information about subitising
- Children's ability to subitise can be developed by teaching. Create activities where children collect a small number of things such as two pieces of fruit at snack time or three balls for the ramp to support their ability to subitise
- Regular dot patterns such as dots on a dice support children to subitise small quantities. Use dotty dice on a large scale outdoors or smaller scale indoors when playing games
- Encourage children to notice and talk about what they see. Model subitising by saying quantities you see, "I can see three worms, look one, two, three."
- Use numerals and dots around the setting to represent number. This way children see the numeral and the visual amount together
- Regularly use fingers to represent numbers and encourage children to do the same. Research has shown that this develops muscle memory which supports learning. Images of fingers are also useful for subitising
- As children begin to accurately subitise small quantities reassure them they don't need to count to check the total as they can rely on their subitising skills.

NDNA products to support you with this

- [Parents: Getting Ready for School: Maths Confidence - factsheet](#)
- [Maths: Making Maths Matter – online course](#)
- [Maths Champions Programme](#)
- [Maths: Maths in Early Years for England – online course](#)
- [Maths: Mini Maths Explorers – Outdoors Challenge – online course](#)

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- [Supporting Your Mini Maths Explorers - publication](#)

Find more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna