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# Little Learners International



(FREE)

Issue 1 2024

## Ideas and inspiration

... Provoke curiosity,  
make friends with your  
feelings and more!

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for details*



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# MAKING FRIENDS WITH YOUR FEELINGS

see  
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## Welcome to first edition of Little Learners International

We've teamed up with our international distribution partner CES to bring the very best early years activities from the UK to the rest of the world.

In this issue, we cover exciting themes from provoking curiosity to magical maths, but also important topics like wellbeing and emotions.






Get big ideas for small spaces as we discover all you can do with a versatile play tray – a must have for early years.

Create curiosity with sand, light boxes and more. We've got a variety of easy activities that you can try in your preschool or nursery.

Promote emotional wellbeing and encourage children make friends with their feelings. Help them build resilience and understand, regulate, and express their emotions.

Delve into the magical world of maths and learn how to make maths fun for little learners.

...all this and more!

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# Play tray inspiration

By Cosy



The trusty play tray is versatile and easy-to-clean, making it the ideal resource for a wide range of activities, both indoor and out. Our friends at Cosy are always creating interesting and inspiring play tray ideas – here are some of their favourites.

## YPO Play Trays

- 801659 YPO Play Tray, Black
- 801663 YPO Adjustable Height Play Tray Stand
- 801662 YPO Play Tray Cover
- 804310 YPO Mini Play tray
- 804311 YPO Adjustable Height Mini Play Tray Stand
- 820824 YPO Mini Play Tray Cover

## Activity 1

### Sand and Water

We love this seaside set up, which is ideal during warmer months. Add shells, natural materials, sea creatures, little boats, and beach huts or even treasure chests to create a pirate cove. You could even create a desert oasis by using small succulents or cacti and adding small world animals such as elephants.

#### What you'll need

- 803022 - YPO Play Sand
- 427185 - Eco Friendly Tactile Shells
- 804309 - Shell Cross Sections
- 305055 - Pine Cones
- D49432 - Maths Boats and People

#### TOP TIP

Try freezing items such as slices of orange and lemon in water and allow children to experiment trying to melt or break the ice to rescue the contents.



## Activity 2

### Small World Play

Play trays are perfect for small world play! Allow children to use their own imagination and self-select items from around the setting, including any natural treasures they can find to create their own small world set ups. Themed small world play works well so you could create a dinosaur, pirates, fairies, forests, or transport themed tray – the possibilities are endless.

#### What you'll need

- 801844 Dinosaur Bones Discovery Kit
- 821074 Bamboo Collecting Pots
- 803994 Jumbo Dinosaurs
- 803902 Flat Pebbles



#### What you'll need

- 806911 Reflective buttons
- 801750 Wooden Sports Cars
- 804337 Shape Drives Arouds



#### What you'll need

- 820807 Trog Towers
- 427726 Natural Architect Panels
- 809506 Rainbow Wooden Figures
- 806910 Rainbow Architect Set
- 747335 Coloured Sand Assorted Colours







**Literacy**  
Add letters and books, story props and loose parts to encourage children to understand a book or story in more depth. Can children retell the story in their own words or act it out with small world items in the tray?

**Activity 3**

- What you'll need**
- 520723 Three Little Pigs Story Set
  - 821081 Large Wooden Alphabet



- What you'll need**
- D49400 Large Wooden Oval Discs
  - 821080 Handcrafted Wooden Letters and Numbers

**Activity 4**

**Messy Play**  
Confined to the tray, messy play can be fun. Add water beads, cooked spaghetti with hidden items to find, Jelly or other taste safe foods (make sure to check for allergies). Crazy foam and Smooshy Sand also make great messy play ingredients, but our favourite element for messy play has got to be glorious mud!

- What you'll need**
- 307301 Smooshy Sand
  - 801114 White Crazy Foam
  - 876063 Coloured Crazy Foam
  - 851353 Soap Flakes
  - 852279 Jelly Crystals



**Topic Trays**  
Double, double, toil and trouble! Get mixing potions and cauldrons of magic delights in the tray. Add pumpkins, leaves, spiders, and cobwebs to discover. Add battery operated tea lights, potion bottles, sticks for stirring and let children make a spooky mess!

**Activity 5**



Get your chopsticks out for Chinese New Year and encourage children to work on their fine motor skills as they attempt to pick up objects like rice and pennies. Christmas, Harvest and Easter Trays are also great and help children to have a more hands on approach while they discover and play with items from that theme.

**Activity 6**

**Mark Making**  
Paints at the ready – add paper and brushes and off they go! You could provide mirrors and encourage children to create self-portraits. Did you know, trays are great for painting directly onto? Or use chalk to draw outlines for children to paint and colour in.



- What you'll need**
- 750024 Chalk Markers
  - 304586 Painting Tools
  - 806441 Expressions Mirrors
  - 307414 Ready Mixed Paint
  - 712221 YPO Assorted Chalk
  - 759031 Flower Mixing Palette





# BIG IDEAS FOR SMALL SPACES

In issue two we asked our readers what they would like to see featured in future issues of Little Learners. We received lots of brilliant suggestions but our favourite came from **Steph Mockett** at Noah's Ark Nursery, who wanted to see ideas for outdoor activities suitable for small spaces.



**T**aking children outside to explore plays such a key role in their learning and development. Unfortunately, many settings, particularly those in urban areas don't have a great deal of outdoor space. We've put together a selection of ideas that can be carried out using an Active World Tray. These plastic trays are a fantastic resource for where space is limited as they can be used for so many different activities and then stacked together and stored away until next time. They are also wipe clean meaning that even the messiest of activities can be easily cleared away.

801659 | Play Tray Black  
801660 | Play Tray Green  
801661 | Play Tray Blue



# 1 Giant weaving frame

Start by securing one end of the string to the underside of the tray with strong tape. Next, wrap the string around the tray going from side to side, creating a random pattern with lots of different sized shapes to thread things through. Secure the remaining loose end to the underside of the tray with more tape and your weaving frame is ready to go. Provide a range of ribbons, fabrics or natural materials and let your little learners get to work creating an outdoor masterpiece whilst developing their fine motor skills and hand to eye coordination.



**718327** | Thick String  
**301892** | Ribbon Assortment



**800162** | River Pebbles  
**451020** | Multi Purpose Compost  
**803022** | Play Sand  
**800160** | Tea Branches

# 2 Small world scene

The size of the trays is ideal for creating a variety of different small world scenarios outside. We've used mud, sand, tea branches and small stones to create a construction site but there are many other ideas you could try. How about using chalk to draw a road layout, placing artificial grass on the base of the tray for a farm or a fairy village or using a safety mirror, fake snow and bubble wrap to make an artic landscape?



**451020** | Multi Purpose Potting Compost  
**816497** | Hand Tools  
**816498** | Watering Can

# 3 Planting station

Put a large washing up bowl filled with potting compost in the centre of the tray along with trowels and a selection of seeds. Give each child a plant pot and let them use the trowels to fill their pots up with compost before choosing which seeds they want to plant. Once the seeds have been planted the children can water them regularly and enjoy watching them grow. We recommend using herbs for this activity as they are quick and easy to grow and once they are ready your little learners can take great delight in harvesting their crops and tasting the results.

# 4 Painting with natural objects

Sometimes the simplest ideas are the best! Use stick tack to secure aluminium foil or poster paper to the base of your tray and let your little learners use natural objects dipped in ready mixed paint to make marks. You could get them to work together to tilt the tray from side to side to see what patterns the objects make as they roll along.



**734528** | YPO Ready Mixed Paint



**800015** | YPO Tweezers  
**810193** | YPO Farm Animal Counters  
**806986** | YPO Cotton Reels

# 5 Small parts

Lay out a selection of small loose parts on the tray. Things like cotton reels, large beads, different shaped counters, buttons and small bricks are ideal for this activity. Provide each child with a container and let them create their own special collection by selecting different objects and using tweezers or tongs to place them into their container. You could try allocating each child a colour or ask them to choose a certain number of objects. This is a fantastic activity for shape and colour recognition, counting and sorting, and for helping to develop that all-important pincer grip.

# 6 Giant bubble tray

Our experience tells us that children love bubbles so why not turn your tray into a giant bubble maker? We used wooden dowel and pipe cleaners to make our giant bubble wands. Bend the pipe cleaners into different geometric shapes, leaving about 5cm on each end to wrap around the dowel (we also recommend using some duct tape to make sure the wands are secure enough to withstand enthusiastic waving). Fill your tray with bubble mixture and let your little learners explore. Try asking them what shape they think the different wands make and watch their amazement when they find out that even the triangular bubble wand makes round bubbles.



**743909** | Assorted Pipecleaners  
**530645** | Dowel  
**801218** | Bubble Mixture



# Provoking Curiosity in Early Years

## Why is it important?

Children are naturally curious, as educators it is our role to encourage and develop this to enable them to learn through their interests and investigations. The more curious a child is the more observant they are, which in turn encourages deeper thinking and an ability to figure things out.

## What can we do to encourage curiosity?

Praise children for being curious, what makes children want to do more of something than being rewarded? Teach children to ask questions, 'what?' 'why?' 'what if?' 'how?'. If a child is confused by something, help them see it as a puzzle to be solved rather than an obstacle. Put children in mixed groups, a child who is endlessly curious may encourage this in a child who is less inquisitive. Engage children in conversations where questions are asked on both sides, a curious educator naturally creates a curious child.

In order to encourage children to use their own curiosity to develop their knowledge, it is important to use resources which encourage independent thinking skills. We have chosen some resources which will enable and empower children through the opportunity to investigate and observe rather than simply following others.

## How can resources help create curiosity?

Open ended resources are key, the more prescriptive they are the less thinking and imagination is encouraged. Mixing formal resources with those collected from nature and everyday life leads to more informal and child led play. Low level units filled with natural resources and blocks allows children the freedom to choose their own path of play rather than being 'told' what and where they should play. Stripping settings back to more natural environments, rationing more over-stimulating items such as brightly coloured plastic will lead to a calmer and more relaxed learning environment where children will want to ask questions.

## Alphabet and Number Coloured Cups

Plastic cups can be used to create a wonderful resource for use on a light box. Use the cups for number and letter recognition, stacking, playing with light, colour, and shadows. Encourage children to start experimenting through their play – asking questions about why/who/where, introduce investigation through senses and building structures. Choose bright, colourful cups for more impact on your light box.

- Use an oil-based pen or Sharpie to write your numbers and letters on the base of the upturned cups.
- Paint over the base with a water-based sealer, 2 or 3 coats will make them last longer.

### What you'll need

- D52696 Investigation Station Light Box
- 754740 Sharpie Twin Tip Makers



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## Curiosity and Sand Play

Sand play introduces endless opportunities for provoking curiosity. Through building and drawing creativity and imagination are nurtured.

- Using kitchen utensils helps children learn about real life and how to engage with everyday objects.
- First experiences in science concepts – what happens when water is introduced to sand? Why does this happen, what happens when the sand dries?
- Maths skills can be supported by introducing measuring cups and jugs.
- Place a sand tray on a lightbox for multi-sensory play – mark making in the sand to reveal patterns and colours.

### What you'll need

- D42088 Sand Tray & Tools
- D52699 Kneel Up Table
- 803022 YPO Play Sand
- 81153X YPO Coloured Play Sand - Blue
- 876093 Messy Play Utensils

## Painting Pebbles – Mix and Match Faces

Paint facial features on pebbles and see how many different faces you can make. You could try more abstract illustrations and create monsters or animals. Paint leaves and flowers to create pebble gardens, the opportunities are endless!

- Choose smooth, flat pebbles.
- Wash the rocks before starting to paint them.
- Seal the rocks with a spray sealer or white paint as a base.
- Paint the pebbles, use an outdoor or multi-surface paint to help them hold up to the elements.
- Use oil based or Sharpies to write on the rocks.
- Finish with a water-based sealer – the more coats the better.

### What you'll need

- 803902 Flat Pebbles
- 735073 Decospray Transparent Varnish
- 759104 Sharpie Fine Markers, Pack of 12





# Provoking Curiosity



## Natural Exploration Treasure Basket

This bumper pack of natural materials is a great way to encourage children to explore and discover the natural world around them. Pack includes: 1kg river pebbles, 1kg polished stones (assorted colours), 500g each of small and large shells, 250g each of branch stumps, 250g regular pine cones, pack of 10 bark squares, pack of 4 seagrass bundles (assorted colours), pack of 4 wild willow balls, pack of 20 bodhi leaves, 250g small gemstones (assorted). For use under adult supervision.

**D45454**



## Reflective Balls - Gold

Robustly constructed from hard wearing stainless steel, these beautiful smooth, hand finished, gold tactile balls provide a stretched version of reality that is distorted like a fish-eye lens giving children a fascinating view of themselves and the world. The balls are lightweight and easy to handle for the youngest children, they can be used indoors or out and provide a focal point for displays. Graduated in size from 60mm to 150mm(Dia).

**809502** Suitable from birth

## Easy Hold Discovery Set

A 6 piece set that allows children to see the world differently. Set includes: transparent acrylic (red, blue and yellow), magnifying lense (with 3 x magnification), double-sided concave/convex mirror and plane mirror.

Frame size: 185(L) x 120mm(W)

Mirror size: 80mm(Dia)

**810569** 12 months+

## Natural Sorting Stones

Stones are a wonderful natural resource that children find hugely appealing. This satisfyingly smooth set of 12 tactile stones has been created to inspire children's natural curiosity as they explore and sort. Older children will enjoy sorting by colour, ordering by size, stacking and matching whilst younger hands will simply like to hold and experience the different sizes and weights. Ideal for treasure baskets and sensory play activities but also durable enough for use in sand, water and outdoors. Each set includes 12 stones in 3 different sizes and 4 colours. Largest stone measures: 80mm

**800943** Suitable from birth

## Reflective Buttons - Silver

Robustly constructed from stainless steel, these 7 giant silver buttons are lightweight, smooth and compellingly tactile to handle. The polished mirror surface provides a slightly curved and distorted reflection which is fascinating for children to observe. Ideal for inspiring creative language, using in imaginative play and constructing fun wobbly stacking towers. Graduated in size from 50 to 140mm(Dia).

**806911** Suitable from birth



## Rainbow Wooden Super Set

Beautiful smooth solid beechwood loose parts in the seven colours of the rainbow, with a natural finish to show the grain of the wood. Ideal for creating imaginative scenes, encouraging construction skills, counting and sorting, stacking and sequencing, pattern-making and learning about colour. The set matches our Rainbow Architect range, but can also be included in any loose parts collection or mixed and matched with our wooden heuristic play resources. Contains 84 wooden pieces, 7 of each shape and size in all the colours of the rainbow. A lovely tactile and visually appealing resource that children of all ages will enjoy exploring.

**809512** 10 months+

## Sensory Squares

This pack of 7 TickIt Sensory Squares are a beautifully made sensory toy which appeals to all ages. Made in rubberwood, they are incredibly durable and are designed to promote observation and exploration for young learners.

**876899** 18 months+

## Shape Mirrors

A set of 4 beautifully crafted beechwood mirrors are perfect for small hands to explore reflections. Each mirror is a different shape: square, circle, triangle and hexagon. Suitable from 10 months +

**427929**



## Wooden Treasures Natural Set

A beautiful set of smooth undyed wooden treasures inspired by nature and discovery. There are 12 different forms designed to stimulate the imagination, engage logic, discover creative ability, develop coordination and enhance fine motor skills. The open-ended nature of uncoloured wood allows for wider imaginative play, to create pictures and stories, practise counting and sorting, design patterns and sequences

**427176** Suitable for age 3 years +





# Mental health & emotional wellbeing

By Yellow Door

Emotional well-being and resilience are vital to the development of young children, providing them with foundational skills for their adult life. Children who can understand, express, and regulate their emotions are well equipped for facing challenges, learning effectively, and planning how to manage themselves when experiencing emotional difficulties.



## Music Makers

Music stimulates more parts of the brain than almost any other activity. It reduces feelings of anxiety and stress, and helps children regulate their emotions. Use of rhythm connects left and right brain hemispheres and calms the traumatised nervous system. Provide opportunities for children to create music, listen to it, identify how it makes them feel, and dance to it.

### What you'll need

- 530949 Emotion Stones
- 898155 Egg Shakers
- 520061 Make your Own Drum Kit
- 564383 Small Wrist Bells
- Suitable music and the means to listen to it
- ... and any other craft resources to make instruments

## Story time

Use picture books, puppets, and small world characters to present children with scenarios that they may face in real life. Situations that the children have recently experienced work well. Listen carefully to the children's responses as they will help you understand how they approach challenges, and how you may be able to support them.

### What you'll need

- 530949 Emotions stones
- 532317 Wooden Character Set
- 532321 Story Talk Sequencing Cards
- 306746 Pip and the bag of Buddies
- 804340 Pet Puppet Buddies
- 520006 Bag of Buddies - set 1
- 427368 Bag of Buddies - set 2

Activity 2



## Sensory First Aid Box

Sensory stimulation enables children to focus on something other than their distressing thoughts or emotions. A first aid kit of resources can help an anxious or distressed child to regain a sense of calm.

Activity 3



### What you'll need

- 530949 Emotions Stones
- 801218 Bubble Mixture
- Stress ball
- Yo-Yo
- Lavender oil
- Scented playdough (see page 6 for recipe)
- Raisins/dried fruit
- Calming music to listen to using headphones

## Show Me How You Feel

Having a good range of arts and crafts resources easily available gives children the opportunity to communicate and understand their emotions, especially when they cannot find the words to do so. Provide standard resources such as paint, brushes, crayons, and paper, but include some more unusual ones too.

### What you'll need

- 530351 Jumbo Emotion Stones
- 803022 YPO Play Sand
- 302204 Clear Trigger Sprayers
- 427176 Wooden Treasures Natural Set
- 804310 YPO Mini Play Tray
- Mud
- Sticks

Activity 4





# Emotional wellbeing PRODUCTS



## Monster Emotions Cushions

Explore emotional expression using the Monster Emotions Cushions. Using colourful monster characters, instead of human characters, helps children to focus on the different emotions being shown.

**D64588** 6 months +

## Little Looking Mirrors

Beautifully crafted beechwood mirrors are perfect for small hands and faces to explore feelings and how they change facial expressions.

**520012** Pack of 6

## Bag of Buddies

Make friends with your feelings! Sometimes giving a child something to talk through helps unlock their emotions. These charming little characters are small enough to sit in the palm of your hand. Set of 4 washable characters in a drawstring bag with practitioner notes to provide guidance and support.

**520006**



## Sensory Worry Stones

This set of tactile stones has been designed to help children focus and maintain a level of calmness. Ideal to be held in the hand, their weight, shape, colour and feel can calm and reassure. By holding and rubbing a stone, the child's sensory input is occupied, helping to relieve stress and anxiety, freeing their mind to focus on the task in front of them. The set includes twelve stones (two each of six designs) allowing children to choose a stone that feels the most comfortable and soothing to them. Stones measure 60-75mm.

**520056** 3 years+

## Let's Talk About When Someone Dies

When someone dies, we can feel a whole host of different emotions and explaining them to a child isn't so easy. This picture book uses clear, easy-to-understand language to answer complex questions about death and how a child might feel when someone dies. It covers all manner of tricky subjects with sensitivity and honesty, from what death is to why people die. Each double page spread takes a child through how they might feel, what they might think and how they might behave. With engaging illustrations, gentle guidance and simple advice for teachers, parents and carers, Let's Talk About When Someone Dies fulfils an important but difficult need for starting conversations with children about death and bereavement, in an accessible and supportive way.

**534563**

## Block Heads - Set 2

These charming and sometimes challenging characters are the perfect starting point for exploring emotions. Through the activities, poems, games and songs featured in the 16-page activity book included in each set, children will develop an understanding of their emotions and the impact they have on themselves and others. They will learn how to talk about and regulate their feelings. Set 2 explores the emotions excited, calm, anxious and jealous.

**520004** 3 years+



## Matching Pairs - Feelings and Emotions

This set of 56 cards is printed with real life photos of various feelings and emotions, featuring a variety of ages, male and female and different ethnic backgrounds. There are 2 each of 28 photos so children can play Matching Pairs. Blank on one side, flip over the discs and find the matching pairs. Use to improve memory skills whilst playing a game of recognition. Photos depict a variety of common feelings and expressions that can stimulate conversation. Cards are bright and sturdy, 8cm in diameter.

**500082** 3 years+



## Wellbeing Book Pack

This wonderful book pack focuses on how situations in our lives can occur and supports children in how they can be dealt with.

**521540**

## Mindfulness Cards

This boxed card deck includes 50 creative mindfulness games, visualizations and exercises. These are divided into 5 categories to help children feel grounded, find calm, improve focus and practice loving, kindness and relaxation. 8 pages of teacher notes show ways to include all abilities of children.

**530277**





# MAKING FRIENDS WITH YOUR FEELINGS

By Cath Chell from Learn Well

Recognising emotions and talking about them is an important skill to teach children; I think we would all agree? But it is not as easy as seeing a smiley face and saying 'happy'! Recognising our own feelings is all about what is going on inside us, it's physical. And we are all different. Unless you run to a mirror every time you feel anything new, very few of us actually see our own faces expressing emotions. So, helping children recognise that heavy weight of sadness in their tummy, that tingle of excitement in their toes or that bumpety bump, fearful heartbeat in their chest takes time, patience, and focus.

The starting point is to embrace **ALL** feelings and accept that they are all valid, rather than thinking of some as good and others as bad. Though, without doubt, some are more pleasant to experience than others. They give us valuable information about ourselves and others. We feel angry if we perceive ourselves to be treated unfairly, or if our boundaries have been violated. We feel sad if we lose someone we love or experience another kind of loss. Envy tells us what we want in life. Fear alerts us to danger and so on. Feelings really are essential for our survival and sense of self; they tell us the kind of people we are.

Helping children to recognise their emotions and understand what has caused the feeling, and then work out if they need to do something or talk to someone is a huge task and not to be rushed or treated lightly.

Take time to explore each emotion in some depth. Through poetry, stories, drama, art and musical activities, give each feeling the space it needs to be recognised, understood and talked about.

Here are some activity ideas to get you started, taken from our Little Book of Big Emotions Series with the kind permission of the authors. Each activity can be done for all emotions (but not at the same time!).

## What you'll need

- 427369 Little Book of Emotions - Pack of 3 ✓
- 520006 Bag of Buddies Set 1 ○
- 427368 Bag of Buddies Set 2 ○
- 520012 Little Looking Mirrors ○



## Whole Body Feelings

You will need a wide roll of paper or take some chalk outside. Children can work in pairs or as a group together with an adult. Ask one of the children to lie down and draw around them. Talk about where you might physically feel the emotion you have chosen. Then colour in that part of the body with pens, pencils, or paint. Think and talk about the colours you are choosing and why. Children could make patterns or shapes that they feel express the feelings you are talking about. There are no right or wrong answers here. Every child's experience is valid. You might extend this activity with older children and write the words that describe the feelings. For example, wobbly knees, shaky legs, sweaty palms, buzzing head.



## Words and Sounds

Build up a vocabulary for each emotion. For example: annoyed, cross, angry, furious, livid. Make posters and displays using words and pictures, photographs, colours and patterns. Together with the children make up sentences with the words in. For example, 'I was furious when my brother broke my toy' or 'I was cross when my mum wouldn't let me stay up late'. Put the words in order of severity.

Give the emotion some sounds, for example: grrrrrrr, aaaaaaargh.

Use percussion instruments (or spoons and pans, twigs and trays, etc) to make noises and rhythms that suit the emotions. You could even add in some actions and movements.



## Story Time

Use story time to explore empathy and understanding. For example, you might ask the children how they think the giant felt when Jack stole his golden egg. Or how did Jack's mum feel when he disappeared up the bean stalk. How did Jack feel when his mum threw the beans out of the window? In this way, story time can be a real prompt for building vocabulary, as well as recognising and understanding the emotions of others.



## Poems with Feelings

Read and talk about the Angry Body poem. Look at the words used for angry: cross, fuming, mad. Ask the children if they know any other words? What about the descriptive words: fizzing, scream, shout, stamp? Can they think of any other words? Ask the children to act them out. Perhaps choose some actions together and then all do the same actions as you recite the poem. You might like to learn it off by heart and give it a little tune. Encourage the children to have a go at writing their own Angry Body poem.





## Making maths magical through play

By Learn Well

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 of different ways, using all of the senses, will build a strong sense of number: the awesome one, the tantalising two, the thunderous three, the fabulous four!

These activities all use the Early Mastery Number Trays but you can do most of them with paper plates, baskets, trays, or bowls.



### What you'll need

- 465301 Early Mastery Number Trays 1-9 ✓
- 465302 Early Mastery Number Trays 10-20 ○
- 305055 Pine Cones ○
- 333971 Skeleton Leaves ○
- 303870 Acrylic Gemstones ○
- 427109 Natural Coconut Shell Circles ○
- 301727 Glitter Woodchips ○
- 804308 Dried Flowers ○
- 800162 River Pebbles ○
- 800015 YPO Tweezers ○
- 427185 Eco Friendly Tactile Shells ○
- 303871 Jumbo Threading Buttons ○
- 309864 Wooden Bead Mix ○
- 300772 Coloured Rice ○
- 803022 YPO Play Sand ○



- Ask children to trace the numeral with their finger.
- Fill the tray with chai seeds, flour, sand 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.

## Collecting Treasures

Go collecting sticks and stones, pine cones and sea shells, flowers and leaves. Let each child have their own number tray. As they collect say "four" things, let them put their treasures on a table; so that eventually they will have a collection of lots of "fours". You could take a photograph of each child's favourite collection and make your own natural number line.



### Extend the activity

- Ask them to look for their number...4 legs on a table, petals on a flower, 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 things you can fit in your tray.
- Talk about similarities and differences. 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?





## Dough Recipe

### What you'll need

- 150g plain flour
- 75g salt
- 250ml boiling water
- 2tbs cream of tartar
- 1tbs vegetable oil

### Method

Place all ingredients in the bowl apart from the boiling water. Give them a good stir and then start to add the boiling water, mixing well until it's all combined and ready to use.

The dough should keep for one or two weeks inside a sealed plastic bag.

### TOP TIPS

To add colour you could try dying it using natural powders like turmeric, cocoa and beetroot powder. For a scented dough, add some of our favourite tried and tested aromas: lavender, mint, tea tree oil, cinnamon, and vanilla extract.



## That's My Number!

Using scented dough, squished into their number tray, ask the children to copy their numeral using loose parts. Squish the pebbles or sparkly beads into the 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?



## Squishy, Smelly Maths

- Using scented 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/wobblest cake? Each additional layer gives more opportunity for counting.

- Using scented dough fill each tray with dough and then squish loose parts into it. Pebbles, sea shells, 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.



## For the older children

### How Many Ways?

How many ways can you make 9? Using real objects, big or small, ugly or beautiful; encourage the children to try and be methodical and logical so 1 and 8, 2 and 7...and so on. Can they spot that 1 and 8 is the same as 8 and 1? Big claps and well done if they spot this!

Split them into groups, so 3 lots of 3 and 2 lots of 4 plus 1...counting and checking along the way that you've always got 9.

For older children, build fluency and speed of recall by adding a timer and see how quickly they can do it! Can they beat their first time? This seemingly simple activity builds so many essential mathematical skills.





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