Early Years

EXCITING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

A Home Learning Collection

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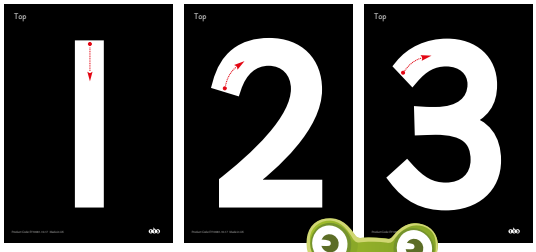
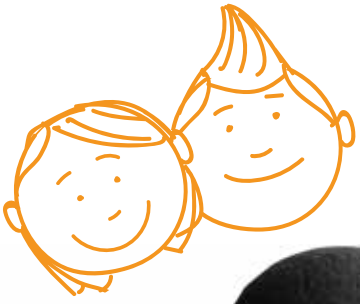




Welcome to the Early Years Activities Collection

We have tried to provide you with a rich and varied range of learning opportunities. They are play based experiences and they fulfil and compliment so many curriculum areas. Play in early years is how children learn and make sense of the world. These are only guide lines and you can adapt the ideas, as you know your children best and can follow their interests.

Each activity is **meant to be cross-curricular**, They do not just cover a maths focus, a literacy focus or a science focus. In early years, we take an integrated approach. It is very much about laying a **firm foundation in a fun and informal manner. This is about a quality, shared time together whilst also supporting their educational enrichment.**

Encouraging children to love language is really important. We want them to have a rich and varied vocabulary. You can help by giving them access to interesting words and by modelling new vocabulary. A good example that a famous educationalist, Alice Sharp, always says is "why use the word red to describe something when you could choose a word like ruby or crimson?" Use these opportunities to widen their word knowledge.

Share stories, sing, say rhymes together, tell and read familiar and new stories. It really does support your child's understanding and development. The activities are not about formal writing. Your child may want to 'write' tickets for a bus or a letter in the post office but it is more about pretending activities than formal written work. Of course, there are some children who will be ready to write sentences and indeed stories. Each child is unique and at different stages of development.

Our literacy activities are about talking, discussing, rhyming and generally having fun with language. A good example is where you make silly sentences together or describe the gloopy, sloppy mixtures you have concocted. We have included some pattern and mark making ideas. They relate to fine motor skills which is an important pre-writing stage. If they are ready to write letters and are engaged, there are some handwriting letter frames.

There are lots of mathematical learning opportunities throughout the book, relating to shapes, sequences, measuring, sorting, comparing, matching, etc. There are also some references to play based counting activities. If your child is interested and ready to form their numbers there are guidelines about numeral formations.

Science underpins all the activities with reference s to experimenting, discovering, comparing, etc. There are some practical tasks which really support learning about materials and their properties.

Early childhood should be magical time. This book is about supporting them in their journey. It's about happy, healthy curious young people making discoveries and having a love of learning.

Enjoy learning and laughing together!

Risk Assessment

With all activities we ask you to reflect on the health and safety aspects. We know you will want to keep your child safe and happy. Please consider any risks. Remember adult supervision is required at all times.

Let's Make It!

Introduction

Play dough is a really quick, easy and satisfying thing to make. The actual making experience with the ingredients and how they react can support children's learning. It can be used in all kinds of learning activities. It needs to be stored in an airtight container or bag if you are going to reuse it.

Play Dough Ingredients

2 cups of plain flour
¾ cup salt
2 cups of warm water
Food colouring (optional)

Play Dough Equipment

Cup
Bowl
Spoon

Method

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- Measure out 2 cups of plain flour and pour into the bowl.
- Measure out ¾ cup of salt and pour into the bowl.
- Measure out 2 cups of warm water and pour into the bowl.
- You can add food colouring if you wish. (Just a drop of your favourite shade).
- Stir the mixture together. It will become sticky. Continue stirring until the mixture has all come together.
- Once the mixture has come together, use your hands to knead the dough.
- If your play dough is too sticky you can add in extra flour.
- Knead the dough into a smooth lump.

Activity

This is a great opportunity to learn about language, science and maths. It is a shared experience.

Start off by exploring the different ingredients together. Do they have the same texture, same colour or consistency? What happens when you add the flour and salt together? Is it dry or wet? What happens when you add in the water?

Use words such as **liquid, dry and wet.** Encourage your child to make observations about the changes throughout the process. Once they have started stirring you can talk about the texture. Is it **sloppy or sticky?** This is learning about the properties and ingredients. Encourage the children to use the language of texture and other descriptive words.

Activities

Introduction

Play dough is a really fun material to play and learn with. You will have your own great ideas. There are so many possibilities for what it can be transformed into. Here are a few ideas to get you started. Find some equipment and utensils from around your home to support your child in exploring and mark making the play dough. You could use a rolling pin, cookie cutters, spoons, jar lids etc. Using a rolling pin helps children to work on their shoulder and arm strength.

Super Dough Spheres

Encourage your child to create play dough balls. Rolling out spheres is an extra challenge for children to use their hands as they have to work in the opposite direction and in circular movements. Make gigantic balls, teeny balls and talk together about their sizes. What terms could you use? Are they miniature, minute, huge, etc.? Compare and contrast. Who has the biggest? Can we make one smaller? Can we make them the same size?

Equipment and Utensils

You may have some utensils (risk assess) that the children can use with their play dough. See what differences it makes using a spoon or a fork to cut up the dough. You may have some child friendly cutlery for your child to use to practice their self-help skills for meal times. The play dough should be nice and soft for children to easily cut through and manipulate (if it sticks you could add a little flour). Let them just play with the utensils and see what they can create.

Activities

Patterns

You may have some equipment that has patterns on. Look on the bottom of a cup or perhaps the handle of a spoon that has an interesting pattern. Try using a spatula to smooth the dough. Using different mashers is also fun. Your child can explore these by pressing the tools against the dough. Look for any similarities and differences. They may want to create their own patterns by making marks in the dough. They could use the end of a spoon or their finger to create dimples and holes. Have they got toys that could make marks in the dough such as a mini car?

Super Snakes

Children can make all kinds of wonderful creations with play dough. They may want to make their own slithery snake. This helps children to use their hands, moving them back and forth in opposite directions. They may create snakes of different lengths and sizes. Which one is the longest? Will it reach the end of the table? Perhaps they have made a tiny, little snake.

Treasure Dough

Use the play dough to hide treasure for your child to discover. You could hide coins, buttons, beads (risk assess) inside the play dough. Digging for treasure is a wonderful workout for your child's hands and fingers. You can talk about the different properties of the treasure you have found. Is it cold, bumpy, shiny or dull? Is it gold,bronze, metal or wooden? Imagine finding pretend rubies, pearls and sapphires.

Fine Motor Skills

Why not encourage your child to isolate their fingers as they experiment? You can say, "Let's get Peter Pointer to press the dough!" You can also get your child to pinch the play dough to work on their pincer grip. Encourage your child to squeeze the play dough in their hands to strengthen their hand grip. Getting the child to use their fingers and hands supports their ability to hold pens and pencils for their writing development.

Creative Play Activities

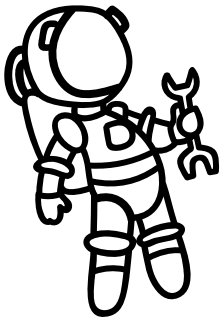
Here are some suggestions as to how you could use your lovely homemade play dough. It is a wonderful material to explore as it can be continuously manipulated and changed.

Perhaps you could make a pretend lunch or tea with the dough. It could be your own bakery, café or restaurant. Think about which equipment you have in your kitchen (risk assess). Have you got a rolling pin to roll out pastry and make pasties or pretend jam tarts? Talk about how the dough rolls out smoothly and how it stretches. You can use scientific and imaginative language. Imagine making a delicious pizza. Which toppings will you add? You could make some cheese, pineapple, tomatoes into shapes and add it to your base. Once you have created the pizza you may want to start slicing it up and sharing it with your family. How many pieces do you have? What about making a special birthday cake. How old is the person? You could add pretend candles. Count the candles and sing the Happy Birthday song together. You could also make food for a feast in a castle. What about making 5 currant buns and singing the song. Have some 1 pence coins and make this a great maths activity as well as being creative and language rich.

Your child may want to create their very own monster. You may have some accessories (risk assess) for them to use as legs, arms, eyes, wings, etc. You can use paper straws, feathers, beads, buttons and wool (risk assess). Talk about what features their monster may have. They may choose 8 legs because they can run really fast or one huge eye that can see everything. What colour is your monster? What is the monster's name? Consider what your monster might eat. The yellow monster's favourite food might be bananas. The green monster's favourite food might be peas.

Think about what animals and creatures live in the forest, such as squirrels and hedgehogs. Perhaps you have some stories based in a forest, such as 'The Gruffalo' by Julia Donaldson. The child may want to create a mouse, a snake, an owl, a fox and even a Gruffalo. You may want to roll out some nuts for the mouse to eat, build a tree top house for the owl or an underground house for the fox. This supports their early literacy development as they recall from stories they know, remembering the beginning, middle and end.

You could use the play dough to create mini worlds. They may create an alien planet, a land of dinosaurs or an under-sea world. They may roll out space rocks and create little hidden alien homes. Think about what the aliens might look like, Will they be tall or short? Have they got two arms? You might have some googly eyes for them to use or they could scrunch up pieces of paper instead. Is it a hot or cold planet? Does the alien need fur to keep it warm?



Science Fun

Gaining a knowledge and understanding of their world.

Introduction

Early years science is all about being curious, investigating and experimenting. We want children to experience different materials, to be able to describe their properties and to see how they can be adapted and changed. This not only helps them to understand their world but helps them to master a scientific vocabulary and use words such as transparent, liquid, smooth, etc.

Here are a few suggestions. **We do advise that there is adult supervision at all times and materials and utensils are risk assessed for safety, including allergies.**

Washing up Bowl Science

- Find a bowl and selection of containers suitable for using in water pouring activities. These might include pans, jugs, empty milk containers, plastic mugs, etc. Ensure the water is at a safe temperature. Let the children empty and fill with the water. Which container holds the most? How many cups of water go into the pan? How many does it take to fill an egg cup? By using a washing up bowl, or a large mixing bowl you will be able to keep the quantity of water down to a minimum to avoid wastage. The children can scoop the water from the bowl into the receptacles.

- Can we change the water? Fill a collection of different containers with water. It could be old yoghurt pots, butter containers, etc. Add food colouring to them, using different colours and stir. Do they all look the same now? Try adding a drop of bubble bath to a container. What happens when you mix it in? Does it bubble? Does it smell different? Did it float on the surface before you stirred it around?

- If you have soap flakes you could try adding a few to warm water (temperature safe). Try stirring and whisking. You have added a solid to a liquid. It should disperse and then with enough whisking become frothy and smooth. Discuss the texture, the aroma, what it looks like, the changes, etc.

- You could add a teaspoon of washing up liquid to the water. What will happen? Does it disappear and disperse when you mix it? Give them different utensils to use. Look at the spoons, ladles, whisks, salad servers, spatulas, etc. Think about what the children could use in their water experiments. Not only are they carrying out experiments, they are using key motor skills. You could also talk about what the utensils are made of e.g. wood, plastic, silicon, metal and what colours they are.

- Try some floating and sinking activities. This doesn't just have to be objects. You could see if sprinkled pepper floats on the surface, or salt, shampoo, vinegar, flour, etc. Then you could try coins, a Lego brick, a lolly stick, a key, etc. You might even build a little boat, or improvise with an empty butter tub and see how much cargo it can hold until it sinks. Can you count the items?

- The washing up bowl also makes a great under the ocean scene. You could add shells, a diver, plastic fish, etc. and make up a deep sea adventure. Your child may have a favourite story or film they could use to explore stories.

Words

empty
pour
absorb
liquid
disperse
fill
solid
varnish
float
compare
sink

Introduction

Science activities give children the opportunity to explore and discover as they learn about simple scientific processes, cause and effect and properties. These activities below offer children fun and explorative ways to learn about the world around them.

What can you find?

Around your home there may be a variety of different materials and properties for children to identify and compare. Together you can collect a variety of different materials such as items of fabric, paper, wood, plastic, glass and metal. Some items you find may look like metal but it could be plastic. What material is underneath. Is it plastic? Sort through these items together to discover. Use empty cardboard boxes to store the different items in. You could tally how many of each you have found. Is there more paper or more plastic?

Floating and Sinking

Fill a tray/basin with water and gather objects with your child from around your home. Discuss whether these objects may float or sink and why. Encourage them to think about size, shape and weight of the objects before they place them in the water. Once you have placed the objects in the water talk with your child if their predictions were correct. Children can learn about making predictions and experimenting.

Feely Bag

You could create your own feely bag, such as an old rucksack, an empty tissue box or cereal box (please no plastic bags) with items in from around the house. Use a bag that your child cannot see through. This is a wonderful opportunity for children to explore their senses. Encourage your child to think about texture and descriptive terms for the objects. Are they bumpy, bubbly, coarse or furry? Children can develop a wide vocabulary by thinking about different texture words. You can use this activity to try and match different items. Can you find two objects that are bumpy or two that are smooth?

Treasure Hunt

You could go on a treasure hunt around your home, searching for metals. You may have a magnet to determine which metals found are magnetic. Not all metals will be. Perhaps you could use a bag or a box to store all the pieces you have found. What colour are they? You may decide to create your own treasure map with hidden treasure at the end.

Natural or Man-made Materials?

Talk about and try to locate things that are natural materials, e.g. wooden items, shells, sand, rocks, wall, leaves, etc. Can you find man-made materials, e.g. plastic?

Incy Wincy Spider

Introduction

This is a great rhyme to sing together.

'Incy Wincy Spider climbed up the water spout,

Down came the rain and washed the spider out.

Out came the sunshine and dried up all the rain,

So, Incy Wincy Spider climbed up the spout again'.

Activities

Sing the rhyme together –
Use lots of actions and act out the spider climbing up the drain pipe. When the rain comes down, mimic the raindrops falling. Open your arms out wide to show the sun coming up. You can also make up your own actions. This is great for learning about prepositions, such as up, down, high and low.

Facts

- All spiders have 8 legs but they don't all look the same. Spiders come in all different shapes, sizes and colours.
- Most spiders are not dangerous and some people keep them as pets.
- Spiders are called arthropods which means they have an exoskeleton on the outside of their bodies.

Make your own spider

Try making them from pom poms, a ping pong ball, a rolled up sock or whatever you can find to improvise. What will you call your spider? Will it be Sid, Sammy, Sol, Sandra, Sindy, Sonya or Simon? Can you think of other names that start with an 's' (This is great for early phonic activity).

Talk about spiders

Talk about spiders and how they have 8 legs. Your spider's legs could be made from strips of cardboard, paper straws, wool or pipe cleaners. Can you count out loud together up to 8?

Research spiders

You may want to do some research on spiders. What interesting facts can you discover? Did you know that only a few spiders are harmful and most are really helpful; some catch flies for example.

Draw or make spider webs

You could cut out a piece of card, draw on lines and then create some holes. You can then weave a web using some wool or string. You could also make your own paper spider to sit on the web.

Read stories about spiders

If you have stories about spiders then you can read them together, e.g. Eric Carle's 'The Very Busy Spider'. You might share rhymes such as Little Miss Muffet or There was an old lady who swallowed a fly. Talking about the stories and rhymes together is a great way to support language skills. You might want to introduce new vocabulary to enrich your child's use of words e.g. how do spiders move? Rather than, just saying 'run'...do they scurry, creep or crawl?

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Introduction

This is great for language skills and lots of fun! Rhymes are really important for children's literacy and communication skills.

Twinkle Twinkle

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

Activities

Singing

Have fun singing or saying the rhyme together. Make your own actions for the stars twinkling in the night sky. When you talk about up above, reach up high. You can be as dramatic and expressive as you wish.

Talk about stars

Where and when will you see them? Use this as an opportunity to enrich your child's language and to have conversations.

Facts

Did you know that there are billions of stars in our solar system.

The nearest star to us is the sun.

People used the stars to navigate their way around.

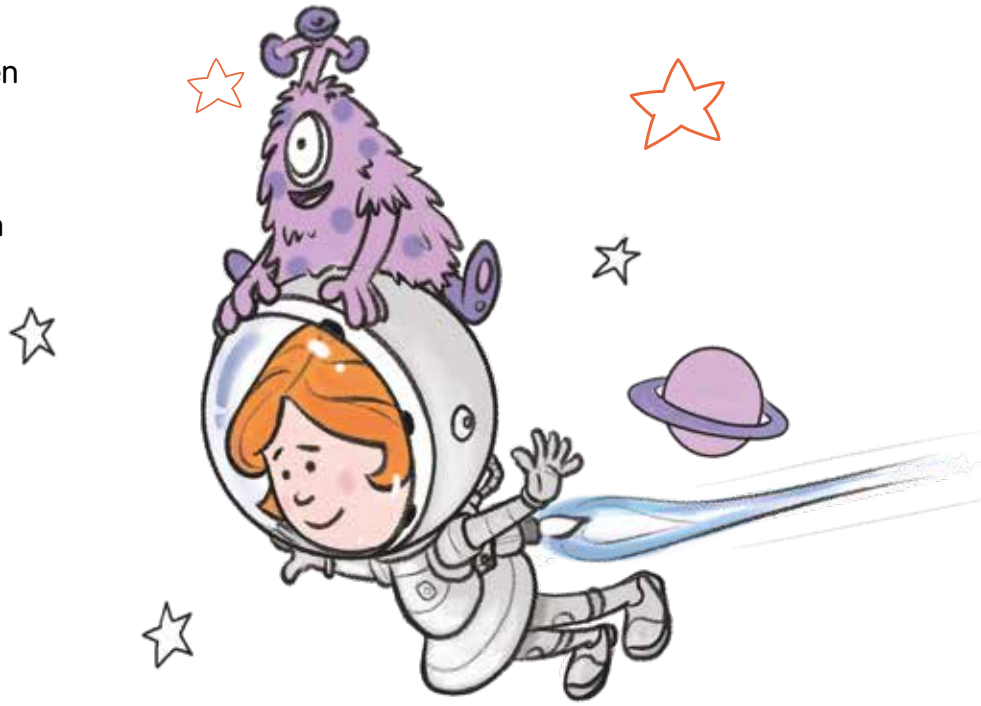
What is a star? A star is actually a ball of gas, mostly hydrogen and helium, which is held together by its own gravity.

Make your own stars

You could draw them and cut them out. Can you make stars in different sizes and patterns? Perhaps you could make them out of different materials. You could try play dough or salt dough. Why not make some star biscuits and ice them. Remember to seek out the opportunities to develop their vocabulary and their understanding. Describe the stars you made. Are they stripy, shiny, sparkly, smooth, zigzagged, soft etc? Which one do you like the best and why? Can you make one that looks like a diamond in the night sky? This is great for learning about properties and scientific language.

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Try sticking tin foil onto card and then cutting out star shapes. You could make patterns with a pencil on the foil. How many stars do you have? Count them together, touching each one as you say the number.



Feeling energetic?

Why not do some star jumps! See how many you can do, counting as you go.

Make a rocket ship

Why not create your own rocket ship together to fly to the stars. You could make this from old boxes, plastic containers, scrap materials and other bits and bobs you can find. Cutting, creating, designing, imagining and inventing are all great learning opportunities. Where will your rocket ship travel to? Will there be a count down… 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, blast off?

What name will you give your super spacecraft?

You may have toy figures that you can incorporate into the play. Your child may pretend to travel through the air and into space. Which planet will they go to? You can use language such as soar, speed, zoom, float and atmosphere.

Why not make a spaceship from your sofa cushions and other bits and bobs

A spoon may be a gear stick or a colander might be a part of the control panel. Use what you have around the house. Pretend you are an astronaut on a mission. This creative activity is great for encouraging them to make up stories, be imaginative and enrich their language.

I'd Love to be an Alien

I'd love to be an alien…
Where would I be from?
A billion trillion miles away -
The planet Megatron.

I'd love to be an alien…
Would I look quite scary?
With eyes on all my hands and feet
And nostrils extra hairy.

The Wheels on the Bus

Introduction

This rhyme is really fun and supports children's language development. It is meant to be interactive with lots of acting and role playing.
Have fun travelling along!

Fact!

Did you know the largest bus in the world can hold up to 300 people?

The Wheels on the Bus

Action
Roll hands around each other

The wheels on the bus go round and round.
Round and round, *Round and round.*
The wheels on the bus go round and round,
All day long.

Action
'Swish' hands in front of you like windscreen wipers

The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish.
Swish, swish, swish, *swish, swish, swish.*
The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish,
All day long.

Action
Slap your palm in front of you like honking a horn

The horn on the bus goes beep, ***beep,*** *beep.*

Action
Pretend to give out a ticket

The driver on the bus says ***'tickets please'***

Activities

Sing and act out this lively rhyme together

We've given some ideas about the actions but you can make your own up. You might have ideas for new verses.

Pretend you are going on a bus journey

Where will you travel to? Will it be a real or imaginary place? You could pretend to be on the bus using a plate or Frisbee as the driving wheel and set off into your adventures. You might want to look at an atlas, a travel brochure, books or online for inspiration. If you are travelling far, you might want to pack a suitcase or a backpack. You could discuss what you might need for a beach holiday or a visit to Santa in an icy landscape.

Make tickets

Why not make your own tickets for the bus. What price will they have on them? Will they be 5p, 10p, 20p, etc? One person could be the bus driver and the other could be the passenger and use the money to pay for the ticket. This will help your children learn about the coin's value and gain an understanding of money.

Design a bus

Can you design a bus? You can draw it and perhaps create one. Use your imagination and think about what special features your bus will have. Be inventive. It could even be a flying bus. Encourage children to think about being a designer, a scientist and an artist whilst they are imagining their creations.

Rolling

Find things that roll. How far can they go? Try rolling things down ramps (a piece of carpet or wood perhaps). Which travel the furthest?

Old MacDonald had a Farm

Introduction

This is a lovely repetitive rhyme that supports children's language development. Children can learn about the importance of farming, healthy eating and animals as well as being creative and having fun.

Old MacDonald had a Farm

Old MacDonald had a farm, e-i-e-i-o,
And on that farm he had a cow, e-i-e-i-o.
With a moo, moo, here and a moo, moo there,
Here a moo, there a moo, everywhere a moo, moo.
Old MacDonald had a farm, e-i-e-i-o.

Old MacDonald had a farm, e-i-e-i-o,
And on that farm he had a sheep, e-i-e-i-o.
With a baa, baa here and a baa, baa there,
Here a baa, there a baa, everywhere a baa, baa.
Old MacDonald had a farm, e-i-e-i-o.

Old MacDonald had a farm, e-i-e-i-o,
And on that farm he had a chicken, e-i-e-i-o.
With a cluck, cluck here and a cluck, cluck there,
Here a cluck, there a cluck, everywhere a cluck, cluck.
Old MacDonald had a farm, e-i-e-i-o.

Old MacDonald had a farm, e-i-e-i-o,
And on that farm he had a horse, e-i-e-i-o.
With a neigh, neigh here and a neigh, neigh there,
Here a neigh, there a neigh, everywhere a neigh, neigh.

Old MacDonald had a farm, e-i-e-i-o.

Facts

The chicken is the closest living relative to the T-Rex.

Pigs can run 11 miles per hour – that's faster than a six minute mile!

Goats have rectangular pupils, allowing them to see well in the dark.

Cows can sense a storm coming and will lie down.

A male goose is called a gander, and a group of geese is called a gaggle.

Activities

Sing this rhyme together

We have provided some verses but you may have your own versions and ideas. You could pat your knees to the beat of the song. You may have some instruments or you could make your own by filling bottles with rice to shake to the beat. You could then tap a spoon on a saucepan.

Mini locations

You might want to make your own farm. It could be on the floor, a table top or in a tray. You could get a big piece of paper and draw out the landscape. What crops will you have? Different cloths, e.g. a clean duster could be a field. Will there be a farm house? You could make this from an old box, such as a shoe box. Where will the cows and horses go? Does the farm need fences to keep the animals safe? A little pond could be made from a circular, small tub, perhaps a margarine tub. This is where the ducks might like to be. What's a baby duck called?

You may have some toy farm animals but if not you could create your own. Draw and cut them out. Imagine a cotton wool sheep or a pom pom sheep. What patterns do cows have? What is a group of cows called? Have lots of discussions and think about the language you are modelling.

When you have created your farm act out stories together. What might happen if someone leaves the gate open? Perhaps you can go looking for the hen's eggs in the straw (chopped up old newspaper).

All about farms

Together you can talk about how farms support our communities. What role does the farmer play? Think about what animals produce. Cows produce milk but so do goats. You can talk about how dairy helps make our bones and teeth strong. Not all farms have animals. What else could they farm? You can talk about all the different crops,fruits and vegetables. Some grow under the ground like potatoes and carrots but some vegetables grow on top like cabbages and broccoli. This is a wonderful opportunity to talk about healthy eating. You could look at what food you have at home. Where does it come from?

Animals and their young

cow – calf	sheep – lamb	pig – piglet
duck – duckling	hen – chick	horse – foal
goat – kid	donkey – foal	dog - puppy

5 Little Speckled Frogs

Introduction

This is a great rhyme to sing together...

5 little speckled frogs, sat on a speckled log,
Eating some most delicious bugs – yum, yum!
One jumped into the pool, where it was nice and cool,
Now there are 4 green speckled frogs

Fantastic Frog Facts

There are more than 5,000 species of frog.

Some frogs can jump over 20 times their own body length. (Try to work out how far 20 times the length of a child could be.)

Frogs don't drink water, they absorb it through their skin.

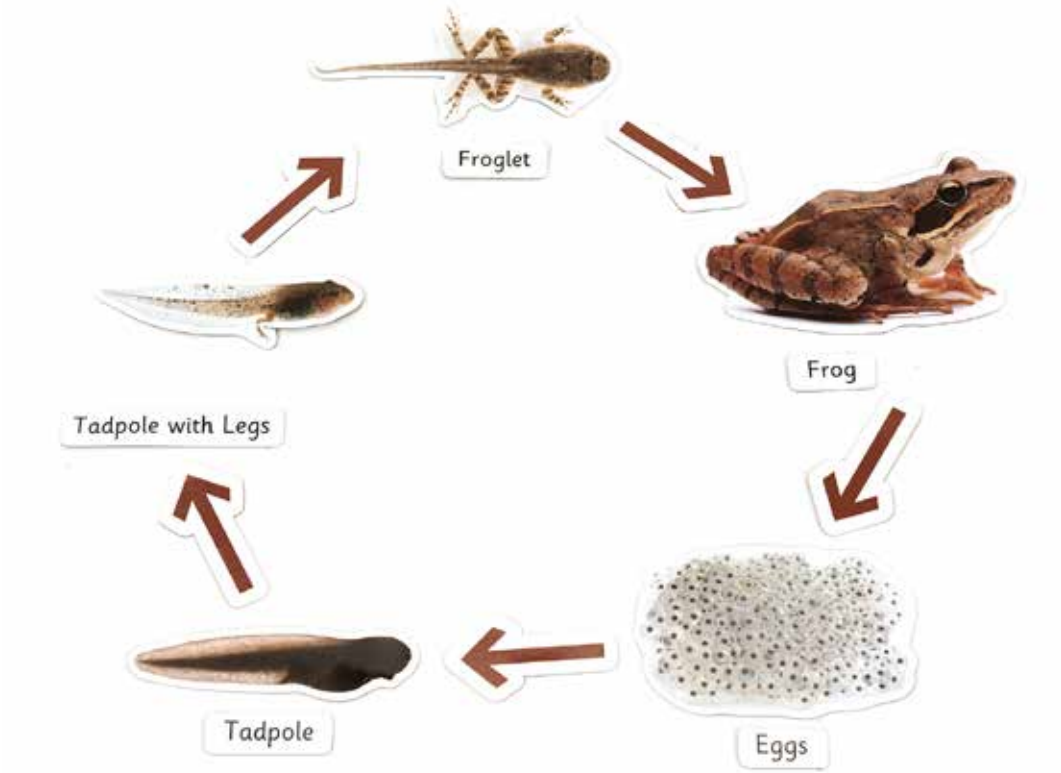
Activities

Sing the rhyme together and act it out using any props you have available. The log might be a chair, a cushion or a piece of wood outside. You might make the frogs by drawing and cutting them out, or they could be rolled up socks or a selection of cuddly toys.

The rhyme is helpful for children's understanding of subtraction and what happens when you take away one item at a time. Using your props, extend their understanding by asking questions such as; "How many frogs would be left if 2 jumped in at the same time?" "What about if 4 more frogs hopped on the log?" etc.

Rhymes - Speckled Frogs

Learn about the life cycle of a frog...



The life cycle of frogs is especially fascinating because they undergo a complete metamorphosis from eggs to tadpoles to frogs.

Eggs Also called frogspawn. Frogs lay lots of these because many will not survive.

Tadpoles After 1 – 3 weeks the eggs hatch into tadpoles.
At around 6 weeks they grow back legs.
At around 9 weeks they grow front legs.

Froglets At about 12 weeks, they look like small frogs. They can leave the water and soon become fully grown.

Describe how tadpoles move. They are quick, rapid, speedy, fast; they wriggle and dart about. Try to imitate a tadpole!

What about frogs? They jump, using their back legs. Try to jump like a frog!

You might draw the life cycle together and label it.

Read about frogs

There are many great books about frogs. A few wonderful examples are: **'Oi Frog'** by Kes Gray, **'The Frog Prince'** – a traditional tale, **'The Story of the Dancing Frog'** by Quentin Blake and **'Grumpy Frog'** by Ed Vere. You could make up your own frog stories.

Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Once upon a time, there was a girl named Goldilocks.
One day she went out for a walk in the forest where she came upon a house.
She knocked on the door but nobody answered. She went inside and looked around.

At the kitchen table she found three bowls of porridge.
Goldilocks was hungry and so she tasted some porridge from the first, big bowl.
"This porridge is too hot!" she cried. She tasted the porridge from the second, medium bowl.
"This porridge is too cold!" she cried. She tasted the porridge in the third, small bowl.
"Yum! This porridge is just right!" she cried. She happily finished the whole bowl.
Once she had eaten the three bears' breakfast she went into the living room for a rest.

She saw three chairs and sat down at the first, large chair.
"This chair is too big!" she cried and sat in the second, medium chair.
"This chair is too lumpy!" she cried and sat in the third, small chair.
"This chair is just right!" she settled into the chair. It broke into pieces!
Goldilocks was feeling really tired now so she went upstairs to the bedroom where she found three beds.

She lay on the first, big bed.
"This bed is too hard!" she cried. She went to lie on the second, medium bed.
"This bed is too soft!" she cried. She went to lie on the third, smallest bed.
"This bed is just right!" she cried. Goldilocks was so comfortable she fell asleep.

As she was sleeping, the three bears came home and went into the kitchen.
"Someone's been eating my porridge", growled Daddy bear.
"Someone's been eating my porridge", growled Mummy Bear.
"Someone's been eating my porridge and they ate it all up", cried Baby bear.

The three bears went into the living room.
"Someone's been sitting in my chair", growled Daddy bear.
"Someone's been sitting in my chair", growled Mummy bear.
"Someone's been sitting in my chair and they've broken it", cried Baby bear.

The three bears went upstairs to the bedroom.
"Someone's been sleeping in my bed!" growled Daddy bear.
"Someone's been sleeping in my bed!" growled Mummy bear.
"Someone's been sleeping in my bed and she's still there!" cried Baby bear.

Baby bear's cry woke Goldilocks up. ***"Help!"*** she screamed and she jumped out of bed.
She ran down the stairs and out of the bear's cottage. Goldilocks was never seen there again.
The end.

Storytime - Goldilocks

Here are some Goldilocks themed learning activities.

Read the story together. It is a deliberately repetitive tale and your child will probably be able to predict what is coming next. Read it several times, using dramatic voices if you wish. Discuss what has happened. How do you think the characters felt? Can you imitate baby bear's voice and say how sad he was that all his breakfast had disappeared. Have fun participating in the story and acting it out.

Maths

There are so many mathematical opportunities in this story. Talk about who is the tallest, shortest, oldest etc. How many bowls were there? Can you find 3 different sized bowls in your kitchen and allocate them to a bear. You might use your cuddly toys to represent characters. Can you find 3 spoons, 3 chairs, etc.? Place one bowl next to one spoon, next to one bear. This is a great 1-1 correspondence activity.

Descriptions

This story has a lot of descriptive words such as hot, cold, lumpy, soft and hard. Why not go around your home and see what items you can find to create a sensory game. You can sort these items out into their properties. Compare and contrast the different items against each other.

What other words can you use to describe texture?

What could you find that is smooth?

What could you find that is fluffy?

Make some porridge

Why not make some porridge together. This could be real or imaginary (risk assess). How does it taste? Think about what toppings you will choose. Talk about how the dry materials go into the liquid and change consistency. Think about how breakfast could be part of the learning experience.

The Story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff

Once upon a time there were three billy goats.
One day the three Billy Goats Gruff set off to find a field of tasty grass.
On the way to the field there was a bridge over a river. Under the bridge lived a Troll.
The first and smallest Billy Goats Gruff came to cross the bridge.
'Trip-trap, trip-trap, trip-trap,' went the goat's hooves on the bridge.
"Who's that trip-trapping over my bridge?" roared the Troll.
"It's me, the first Billy Goat Gruff. I want to eat the tasty grass in the field."
"I'm coming to gobble you up!" roared the Troll.
"Oh no, please don't! I am much too small. Wait until the second Billy Goat comes. He is much bigger."
"Very well," said the Troll and he let the smallest Billy Goat pass.
'Trip-trap, trip-trap, trip-trap,' went the second goat's hooves on the bridge.
"Who's that trip-trapping over my bridge?" roared the Troll.
"It's me, the second Billy Goat Gruff. I want to eat the tasty grass in the field."
"I'm coming to gobble you up!" roared the Troll.
"Oh no, please don't! I am not as big as the third Billy Goat Gruff. He is much bigger than me!"
"Very well," said the Troll and he let the medium-sized Billy Goat pass.
'TRIP-TRAP, TRIP-TRAP, TRIP-TRAP," went the goat's hooves on the bridge but much louder than before.
"Who's that trip-trapping over my bridge?" roared the Troll.
"It's me, the third and biggest Billy Goat Gruff."
"I'm coming to gobble you up!" roared the Troll.
"Well come along, I'm ready for you," said the biggest Billy Goat Gruff.
The Troll began to run towards him, but the biggest Billy Goat put down his horns and tossed the Troll straight off the bridge. SPLASH! The Troll landed in the river below.
The biggest Billy Goat crossed the bridge to his brothers. They happily ate as much delicious green grass as they wanted.

Learning Activities

Read the story together a few times. Your child may pick out the repetitive phrases and predict what may happen next. You may want to use different voices for the characters. The smallest goat could have a teeny, tiny voice and the Troll could have a deep, growly voice.

Creating

You may want to act the story out. Perhaps you could make some goat and Troll masks from old cereal boxes, paper plates or paper. You could even make your own little Billy Goat puppets from lollypop sticks or sock puppets. What do you think the characters will look like? Would the Troll be very tall? You could draw around your child on a large piece of paper to make a giant figure shape.

Maths

This story has lots of mathematical language. Talk to your child about the different sized goats; small, medium and large. The Troll might be gigantic. Try to find other words for large; huge, immense, massive, etc. You could build your own bridge from cushions, boxes, Lego or blocks. Use positional language such as over, under, beneath and on top. Try to find other words for large, e.g. huge, immense, massive etc.

Language

This is a wonderful story to learn about sounds. Could you trip-trap around your home? Think about the different sounds. Can you trip-trap quietly like the smallest Billy Goat or loudly like the biggest Billy Goat? You might think about different sounds in your home. What can you hear when you listen carefully? You might be able to hear the ping of a microwave. Can you hear the fridge? Perhaps you could record the sounds around you?

Let's Sort, Count, Match and Share!

Introduction

It is really important that young children have quality play experiences where they can sort, compare and match things. This all takes place before they do more formal maths and it will help to form a solid foundation.

Here are some activities:

- You may have a collection of buttons, pegs, pens, crayons, play animals, etc. Find containers for the children to sort into. It could be bowls, cake tins, etc. Look carefully at what you are sorting. For example, can you put all the same shapes together? Or, could you sort by:

  - Size?
  - Material? e.g. metal, plastic, wooden, etc.
  - Colour?
  - Animal?
  - Shape

- Sorting is a great activity as the children have to use observation skills. Buttons can look very similar but are they really, when you take a closer look, do they have the same number of holes? You might have beads that could be sorted and classified. It might even be that you sort all the tins in the cupboard. Can you find all the soup tins, the tins of tomatoes, etc. and group them together?

- You may wish to count out different amounts. It is useful with young children to touch the item as they say the amount with you. There are so many things you could count. How may chairs, cushions, spoons, etc?

Let's Sort, Count, Match and Share!

- Play matching games. You could play snap type activities. Turn all the cards over and then take it in turns to turn two over. If they match, you keep them. If not, turn them back and try to remember what was on the card for next time. Dominoes is also a good game for developing matching skills.

- Matching pairs of socks, gloves or mittens together uses great comparing skills.

- Go on a colour treasure hunt! Can you find all the things that are green? Are they all the same? Some will be mint green, emerald green, dark green, etc.

- Setting the table has its mathematical relevance. Each person may need a knife and fork and possibly a spoon. Do they each need a plate? Children will need to match the utensils to the amount of people who will be eating.

- One to one correspondence is where you match to specific things. For example, if you had 5 teddies you could ensure they all had one plate, one spoon, one apple and one book. If you had 5 oranges, you could also share them out equally.

Introduction

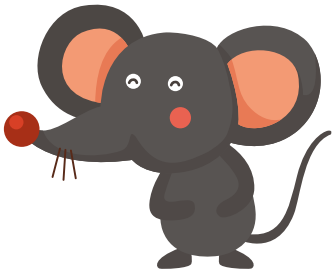
There's so much you can do about learning about sizes and measurement in a play based way. It is important to use lots of different terms to increase your child's mathematical vocabulary as well as their understanding.

Vocabulary

Long, longer, shorter, short, wide, narrow, big, little huge, immense, giant, minute, tiny, teeny, same, taller, etc..

big

small



Activities

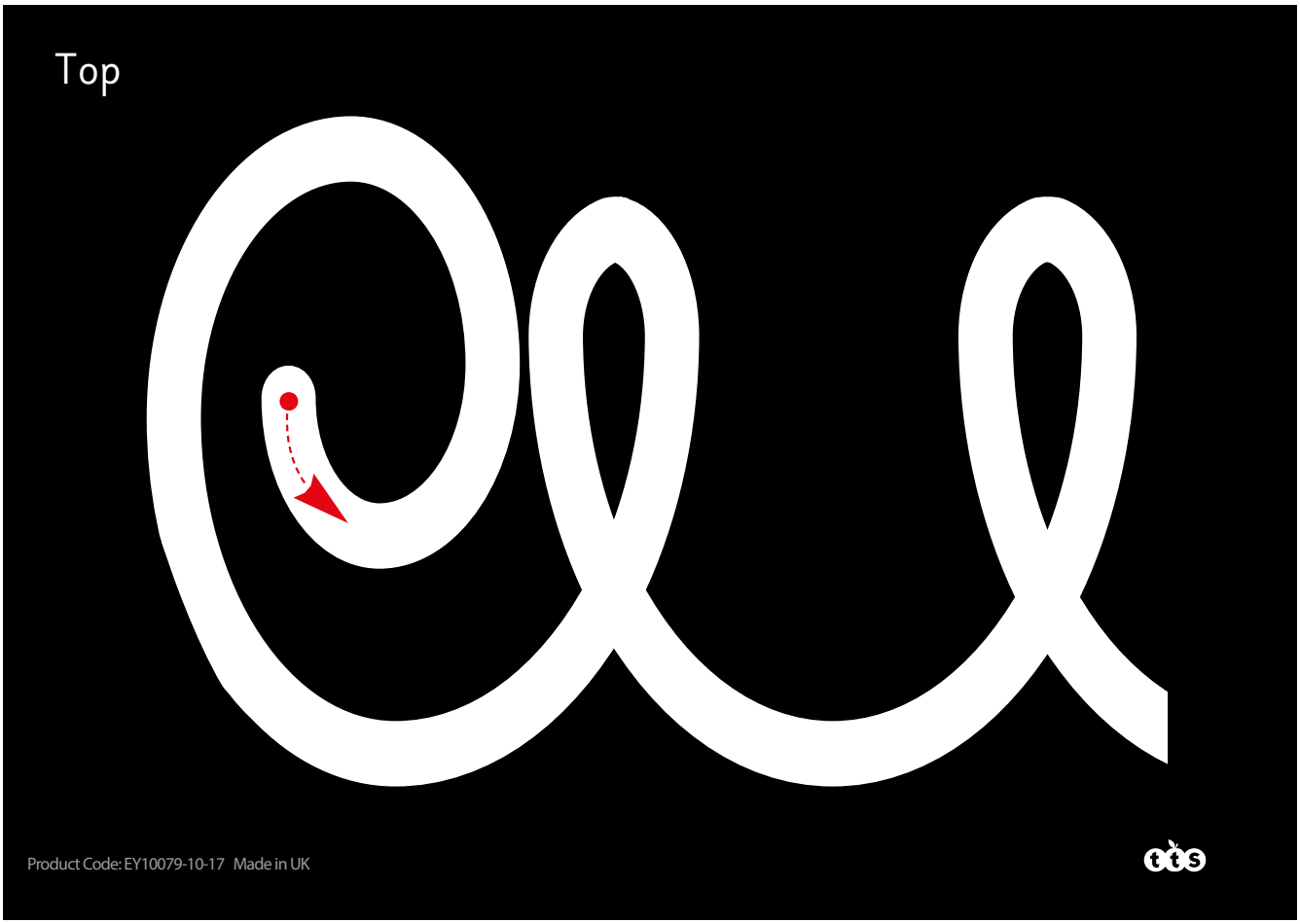
- Find your dolls, teddies, play figures etc. Line them up from the tallest to the shortest.
- How tall are you? Can you measure your height? Young children often like playing with tape measures. Let them just experience and explore. They could also play with rulers and see how long things are.
- Use a spoon as a measuring device. Go around and see if things are the same size, shorter or longer than the spoon.
- Why not make a paper chain. Talk about this getting, longer, the more you add. You could measure it. You could also count the links together.
- How many strides is the room length? How many steps is it?
- Who is the tallest in your house? Who is the shortest and who is in the middle?
- Can you make a list or a collection of teeny, tiny things? What other words describe small?
- Which things are larger than e.g. a cow? Could it be a bus, a whale, a house, a car etc? Make a list or draw things.
- Draw around your hands. Who has the largest hands? How many fingers do you have?
- Make long and short play dough worms and snakes.

Patterns and Mark Making

Introduction

Writing is an important skill for children to develop, it takes time, practice and encouragement. You can support this skill by doing mark making activities. It all starts with lines, circles and 'scribbles' Give them big pieces of paper to make large sweeping lines. They can make circles, dots, dashes, etc. Children can mark make using their fingers, spoons, sticks, paintbrushes in flour, paint, sand, etc.

Simply put some flour in a tray and make zig-zags, dots and lines. When you have finished simply shake it away and start again.



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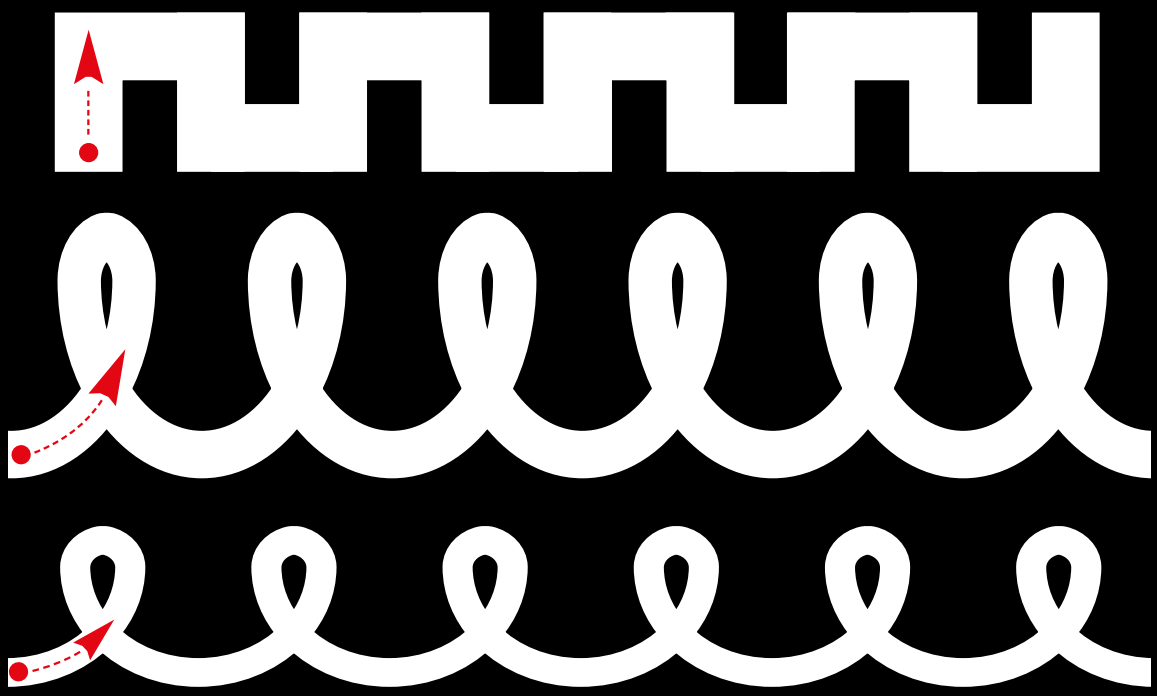

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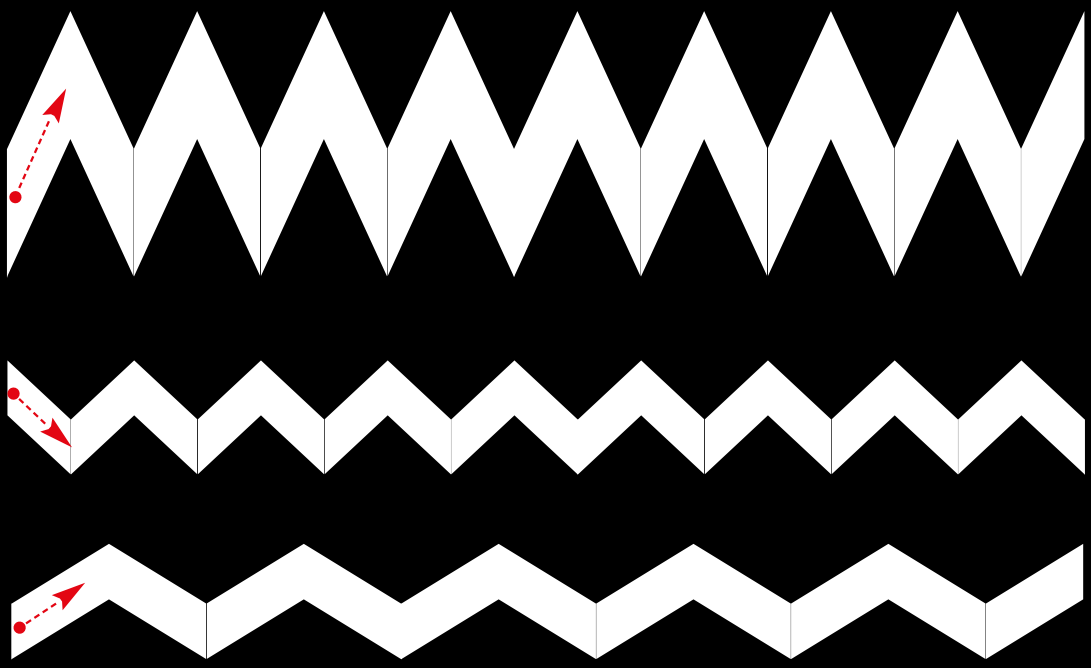

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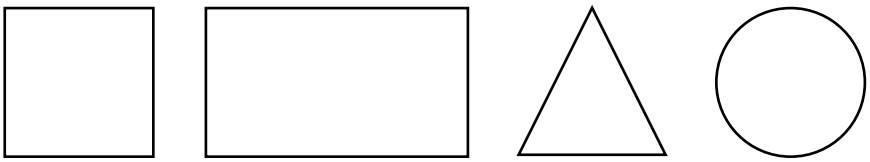
Shapes

Introduction

Learning about shapes is a key skill. Showing awareness of shapes in the environment is a large part of that. Shapes are everywhere and as soon as they are tuned into them, children will love pointing them out wherever they go.

Activities

(regular shapes)



2D Shape Hunt
Simply walk around your rooms and look for shapes. What can you see? The first regular shape names they will learn are a square, a rectangle, a circle and a triangle.

- You might choose one shape to spot at a time. Where are all the circles? Your child might want to record what they see in some way, drawing or tallying for example, or may simply like to point them out. You could also take photographs. How many did you find?

- As you look around, talk about some shapes are bigger, smaller, patterned, up high, next to, under and over things, etc.

Making Shapes

- Can you find things to draw around that are circles, triangles etc? You might find a cup, a plate, a saucer, etc. There will be all kind of sizes; larger, smaller and wider. If you cannot find the other shapes try and draw them and cut them out of paper or card.

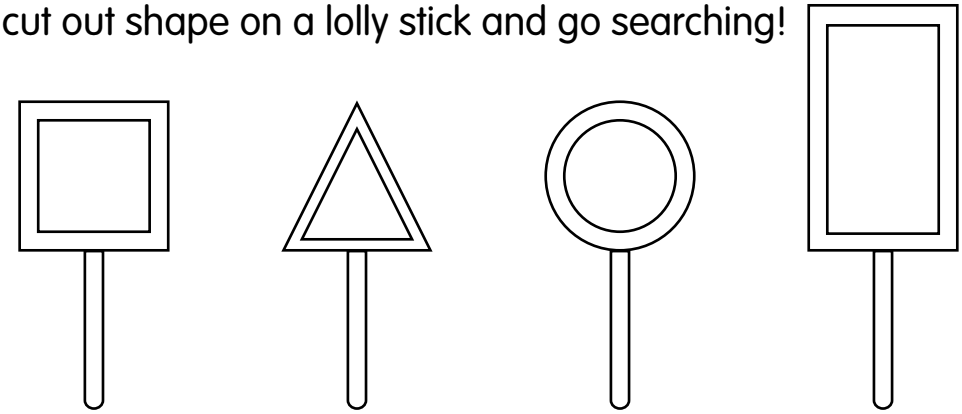
- Can you make shapes with stickers, straws and dough? Imagine making an outline of a huge triangle with string, wood, tinsel or even bricks.

- Regular shapes have sides that are equal and irregular shapes do not. There will be lots of things around you that are irregular shapes (the clouds are irregular shapes).

- Children like printing with shapes. Can you find things that you do not mind getting paint on them? It could be bricks or cups, plastic toys, lids, etc? Put some paint on a tray and dip them into it and then transfer onto a piece of paper. You could make a house, a castle, a boat, etc.

- Try making sequencing patterns with shapes. This could be cut out shapes, printed shapes or play dough shapes. It could be a circle, square, circle, square, circle etc. It could be a red triangle, blue triangle, red triangle, red triangle, blue triangle, etc.

- Make your own shape viewer.
  Stick the cut out shape on a lolly stick and go searching!



Let's Go Shopping!

Introduction

Why not create your own little shops and Post Office in your home. This is a great theme for supporting literacy and mathematical skills as well as so many other key learning areas.

Facts!

The first post office opened in London in 1943.

The biggest shop in the world is Macy's in New York.

The first shopping trolley was invented in 1937 by Sylvan Goldman.

Activities

Create your own little shop.
It could be set up on a table, on a tray, a cardboard box, etc. What is the name of your shop? Could you make a shop sign? What are its opening times? Perhaps you need a sign to show open and closed?

You may want to stock your store with things from your cupboard.
Use cereal boxes, tins, washed plastic milk containers, etc. You may have some fruit and vegetables, real or pretend. Set the scene and layout your shop (There are some fruit and vegetable pictures at the back of the book you could print and cut out).

How will you price your items?
Do you need to make labels? Do you need to have some scales to weigh things? You could compare heavy and light things.

Do you need a pretend till or scanner?
You can improvise. It could be a box of coins and the scanner could be a spoon. Playing shopping games really helps children learn about coins and their value. Use real coins or make your own. Your customers may need a receipt.

Activities

Act out shopping scenes e.g, "Good morning I'd like an orange, some milk and yogurt please." Role play different conversations. This is a lovely social activity and fun!

You may adapt your shop. Imagine it as a Post Office. You could have a post box and write letters and even make and design a stamp. Try wrapping pretend parcels and then delivering them. Wrapping is great for fine motor skills and for learning about 3D shapes. You might want to try wrapping interesting shapes like a teddy bear. You could use recycled paper to do this or use old newspaper.

Try making a toy shop. You could use the toys you have in your own home. You could even design and draw your own.

Your child might have their own ideas for a shop. It could sell socks, cushions, spoons, books, etc. The themes can be from their imagination.

Happy Shopping!

Let's Get Moving!

Introduction

This activity is great to get children active whilst also practising counting (in this case being able to match one number to one movement).

How to play

Cut out number cards 1 – 9 and the Let's Get Moving cards.
Shuffle both lots of cards and place face down in two different piles.
Children choose an exercise card and a number card.
Repeat the exercise on the card the same number of times as the number card.

The exercises are as follows:

- Star jumps
- Skips (with a rope or without if you don't have one)
- Throw a bean bag (or similar) in the air and catch it
- Hop on the spot
- Jump in and out of a hoop (or a circle drawn on the floor)
- Crouch down and stretch up
- Turn (one whole turn on the spot)
- Touch your own heads, shoulders, knees and toes
- High knees walk on the spot
- Run on the spot

To make the activity more challenging, you might increase the numbers on the cards up to 20, or choose two and add them together.

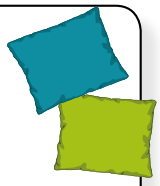
Let's Get Moving!

Star Jumps

Skipping

Hop on the spot

Throw and catch beanbags



Jump in and out of a hoop

Crouch down, stretch up

Turn

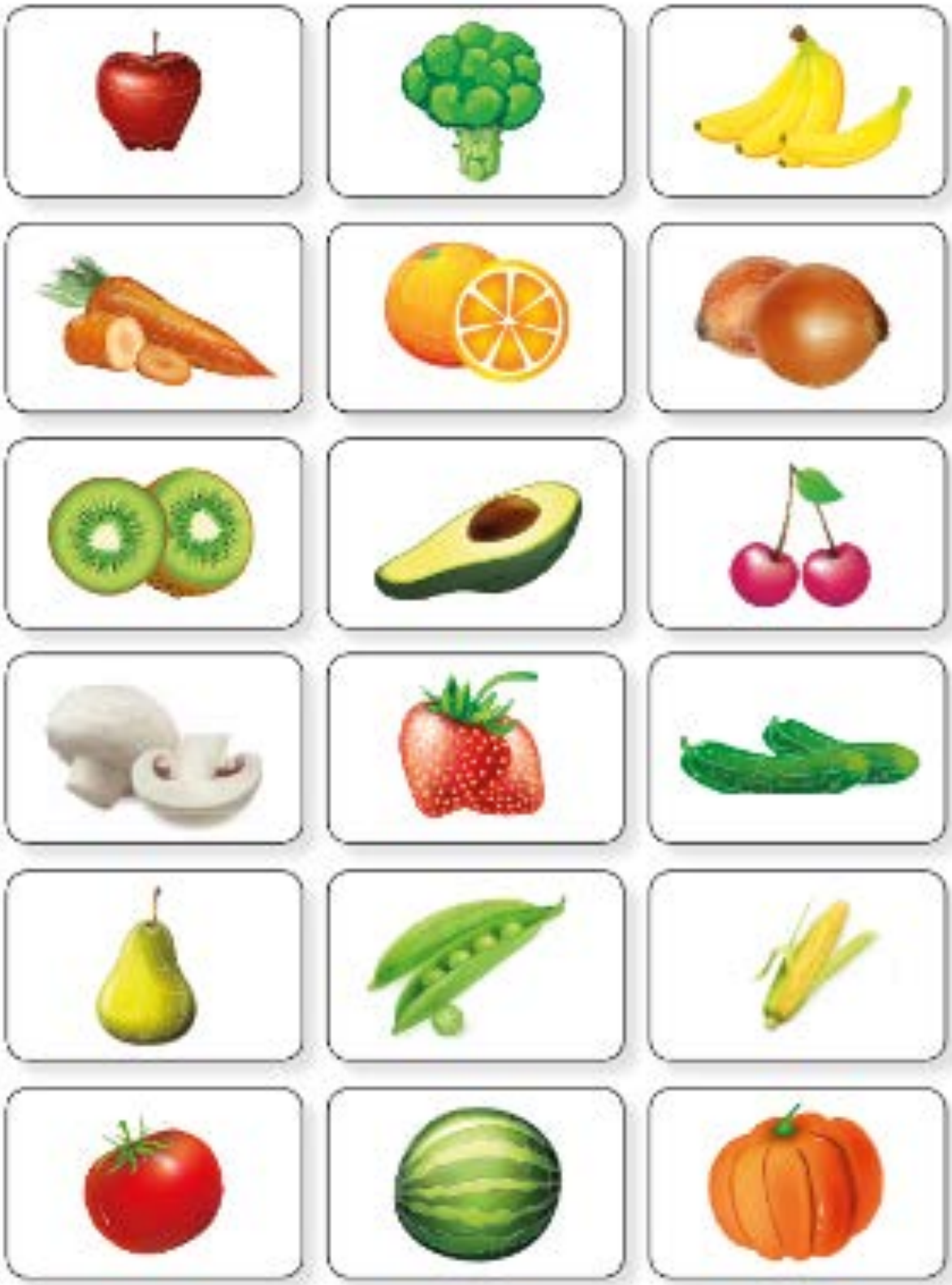
Touch head, shoulders, knees & toes

High knee walks

Run on the spot

Fruit and Vegetable Cards

These cards can be duplicated to play food snap, paired for matching games etc.
They can also be lined up in the shopping activities.



Cooking Together

Introduction

Preparing food together is a really lovely learning and social experience. There can be Maths, Science and a rich use of language throughout the experience. (Risk assess all the stages carefully, cutting the vegetables, considering allergies etc.)

Vegetable Soup

Select a collection of vegetables that you think will make a tasty soup. It could be potatoes, broccoli, peas, cauliflower sweetcorn, carrots, leeks etc. It would be great to introduce them to vegetables they are they are not familiar with. Have they tried sweet potato or swede?

Stage 1
Wash the vegetables thoroughly

Look carefully at them and describe how they look, their texture and how they smell. Do they have skin? Are some vegetables smooth, lumpy, bumpy, shiny etc.?

Stage 2
Carefully peel and prepare the soup contents

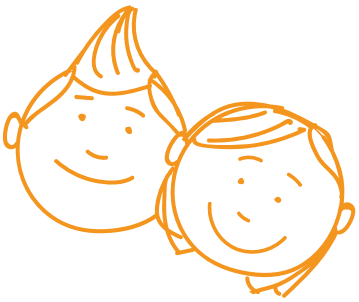
Be careful cutting the ingredients. Does the inside of the vegetable/fruit look different from the outside? Can you see seeds, patterns etc.?

Stage 3
Place your ingredients in a large pan and add water

You might want to add herbs and seasoning. The adult can then look after the cooking of the soup for safety reasons. You may wish to add pasta towards the end of the cooking process.

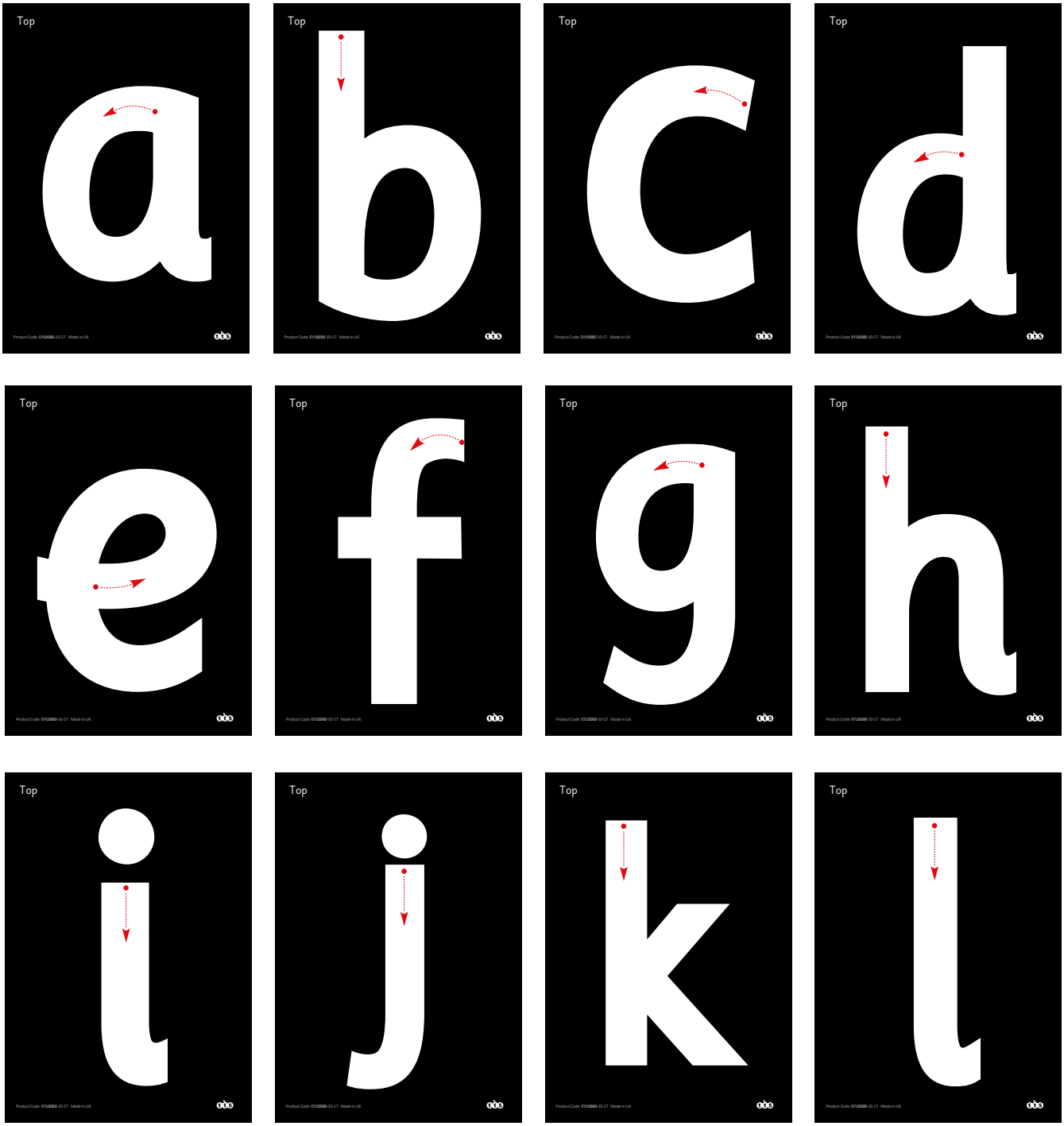
This is a delicious, healthy meal. It may encourage your child to eat more vegetables as they feel a sense of ownership over the process. This activity is creating scientific knowledge as you are learning about how and why things grow, the names, the textures, the colours and then how they taste.

Enjoy!

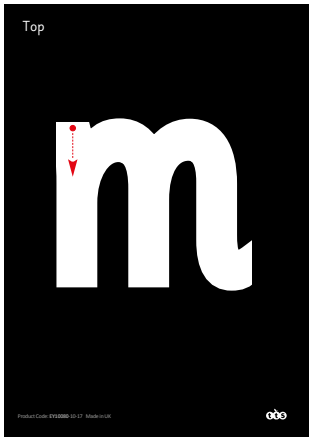


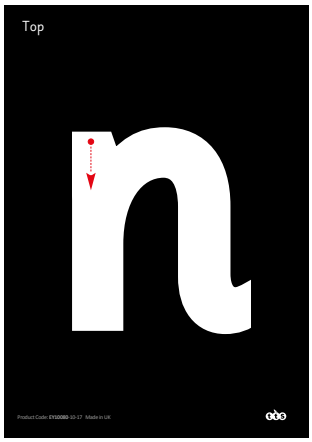
Letter Formation Cards

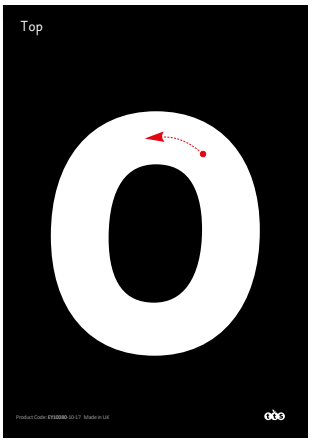
Print the cards and then find the dots and arrows which show you where to start. *(You might want to practise this in sand or flour before using pens and pencils.)* If you don't have a printer you could use this as a guide.

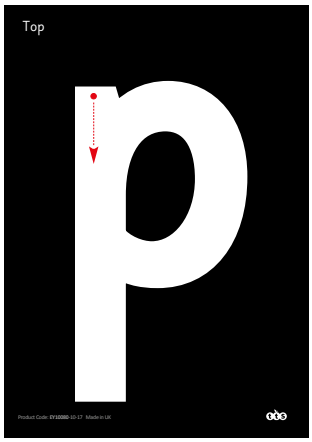


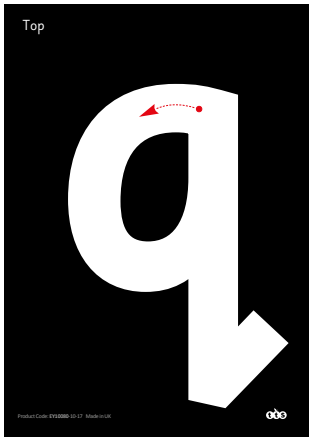
Letter Formation

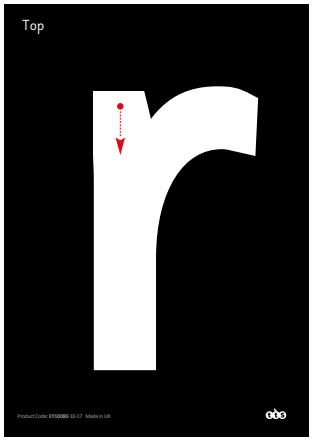


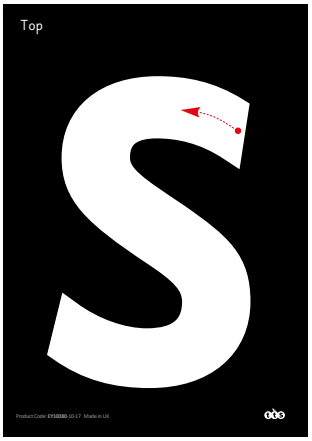


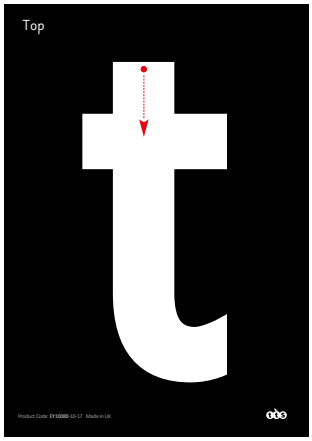


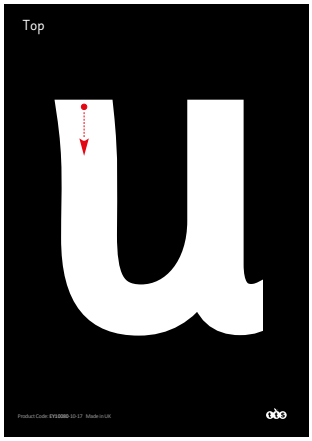


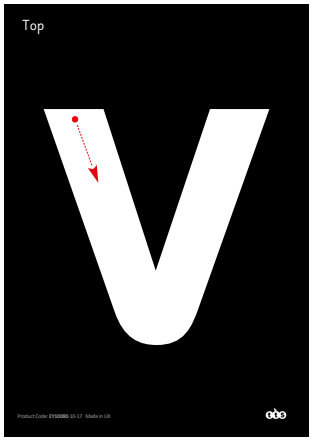


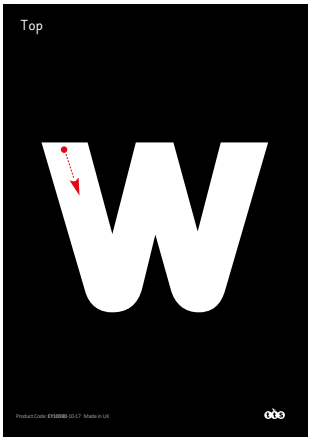


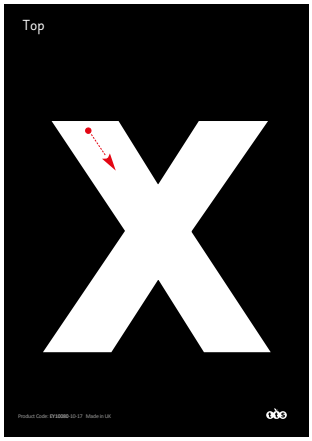


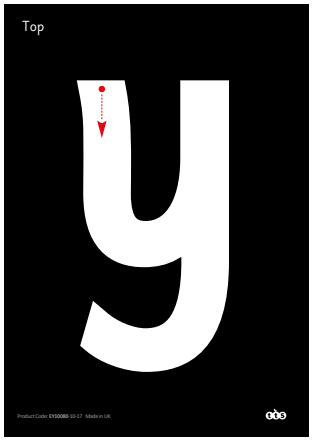


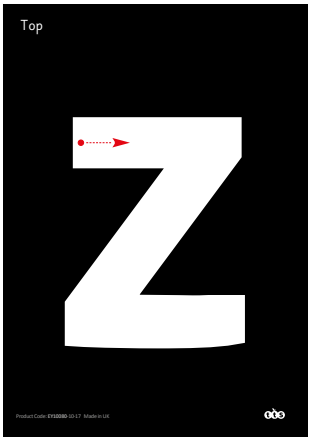






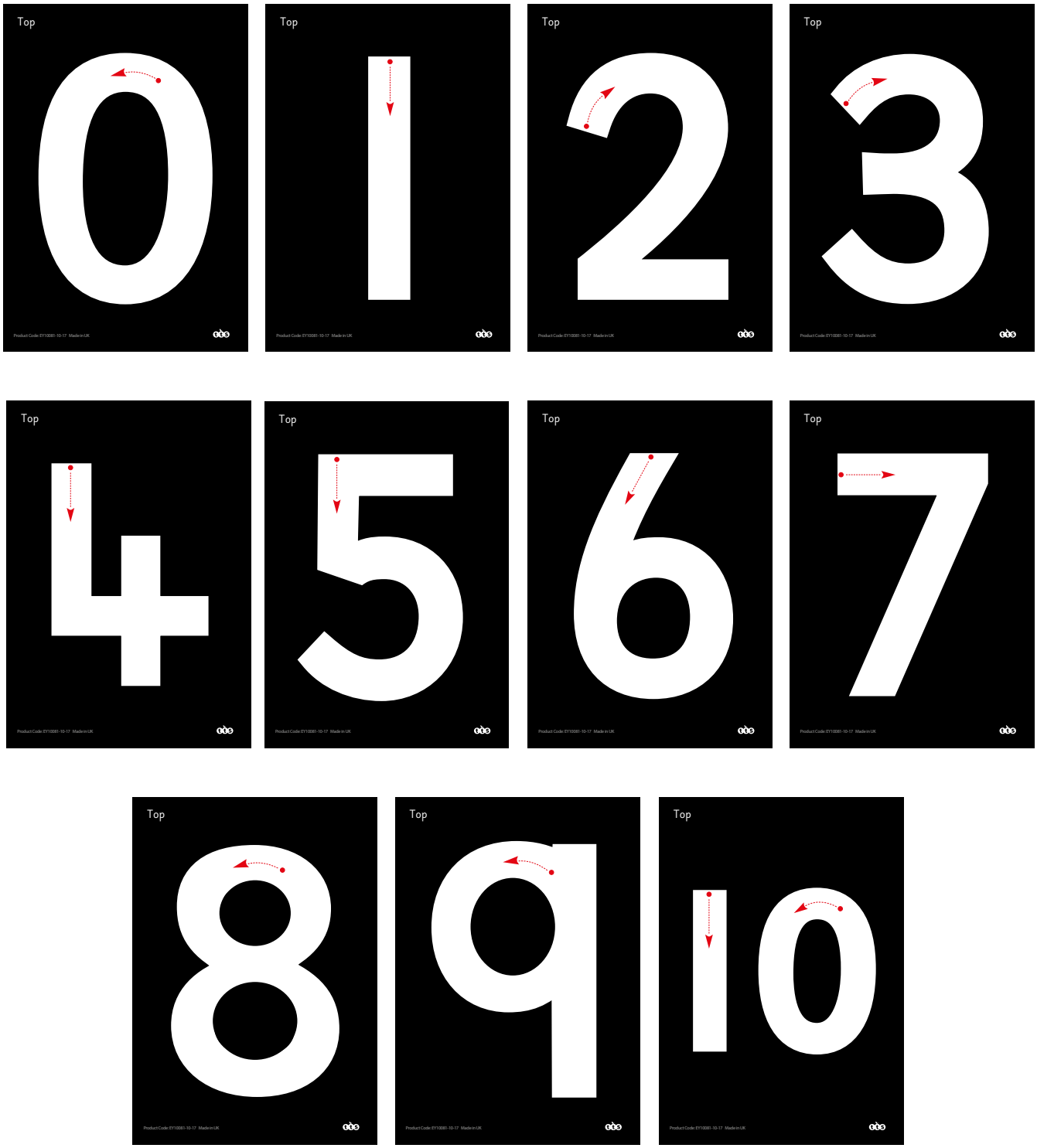




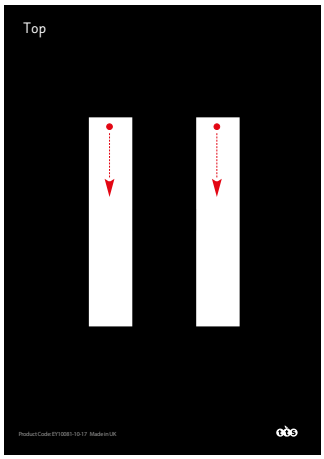


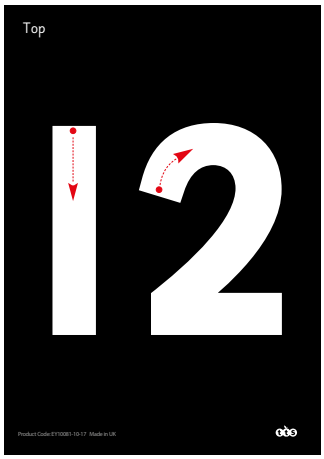
Number Formation Cards

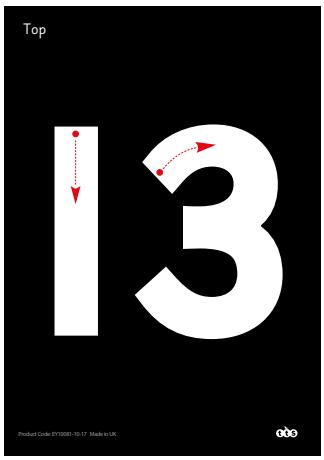
Print the cards and you could possibily cut them out. Find the starting dot and follow the arrows. *(You might want to try the formation in sand or flour first before using pens or pencils.)* If you do not have a printer you could use this as a guide.

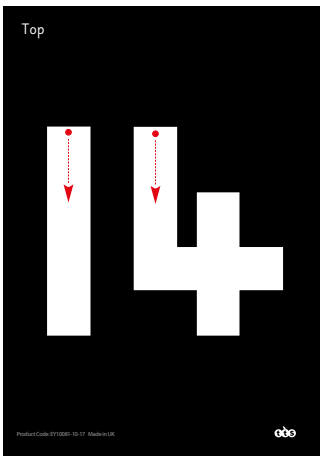


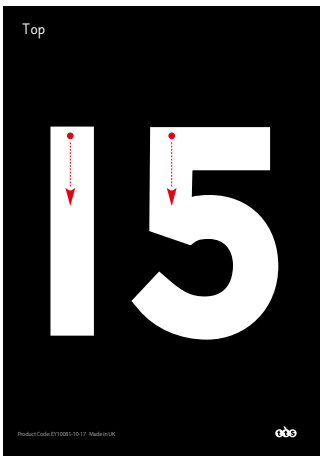
Number Formation

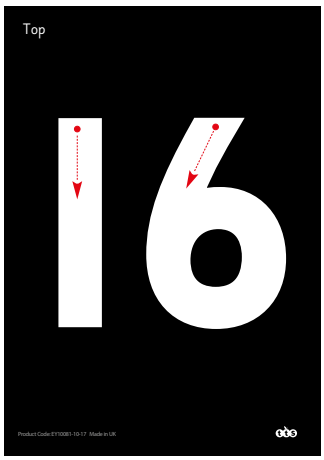


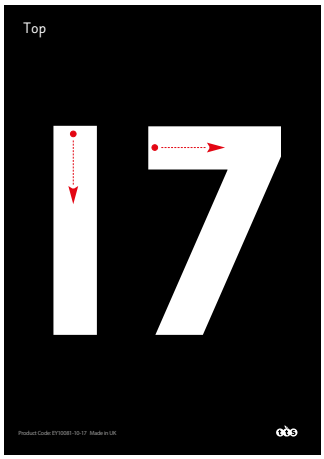


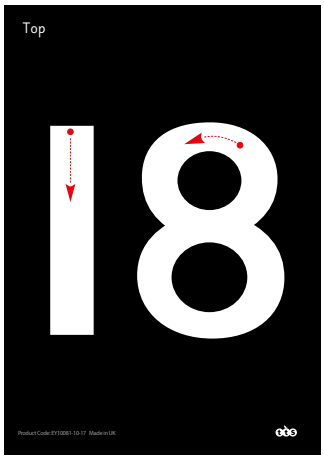


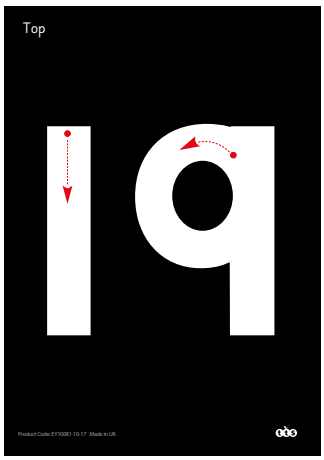












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