



Fishbowl!

Children explore basic concepts of numbers, counting, and patterns through playing games with assorted playful objects.

START

- The goal of this activity is for children to explore numbers, counting, and patterns through counting activities and by creating patterns with a variety of objects.
- Work area can be any clean, flat surface; for example, table, carpet, floor, or plastic trays.
- Introduce the activity by showing children the fishbowl and asking Who would like to play with the objects in this fishbowl?
- Depending on the number of children, you can empty the fishbowl contents onto the center of the floor, or into a few smaller piles, and let each child pick out 10 objects.

NEXT STEPS

- For younger children, you can ask them to describe their objects with simple questions such as Who has a bird? What colors are on the bird?
- For older children, you can ask them to describe their objects, giving them leading questions, if needed, such as How many legs do your animals have?
- Ask the children to identify what some of the different objects have in common. Then ask if they can sort them or line them up according to a particular characteristic. For example, You have shown me 3 green pom-poms. Is there anything else in your collection that has green in it?
- Next, show the pattern examples and see if the children can identify the patterns. Ask if they would like to create pattern groups of their own. They can use the pattern boards, plastic trays, or a small area of the table or floor.
- When they are finished, have the children describe their patterns. Make sure they incorporate counting, as well as color and shape vocabulary by asking questions such as How many green pom-poms are in the row? How many blue? For older children, you can ask questions such as How many more birds and fish would it take to fill up your entire paper grid?

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MATERIALS

- * Plastic fishbowl or other clear 1-gallon container
- * Assorted 1"-2" child-friendly objects; 5 or 10 each with common attributes, such as birds or green pom-poms, and a few individual items, such as a green plastic tree or toy car
- * Paper marked off into 2" squares for pattern boards
- * Examples of patterns, such as cloth fabric or wrapping paper with clear repeating designs or simple hand-drawn patterns on paper

Learning Guideline:

Math: Connect many kinds/quantities of concrete objects and actions to numbers; and recognize, describe, create, and compare repeating patterns of concrete materials.

Tip Sheets:

Think, Explore



(continued from side 1)



FINISH UP

- Create a group chart describing the different patterns the children came up with, using numbers and attribute adjectives for each. Using the chart, see if anyone had similar patterns, such as 2 pom-poms, plastic animal, 2 pom-poms, plastic fruit, 2 pom-poms; or green objects, blue objects, green objects.
- Make sure everyone cleans up their objects and returns them to the fishbowl.

EXPAND YOUR ACTIVITY

- See if the children can use the same objects to come up with a different pattern series.
- Have the children go back to the fishbowl and select other objects to extend or expand their patterns.

TAKE IT HOME

- Create your own Family Fishbowl at home by collecting objects from around the house. If your child has a particular favorite interest such as animals or vehicles, you can also develop a themed collection.
- Invite family or friends to explore the fishbowl contents and play the pattern-making game. For younger children, you can make the patterns together; for older children, you can have them make their own and describe them to you.
- Look for other places in your daily life where there are patterns, such as table settings, cabinets, and gardens. Talk about them with your children and make a game of finding as many as you can.

BOOKS

- *Feast for 10* by Cathryn Falwell
- *Busy Bugs: A Book About Patterns* by Jayne Harvey
- *The Quilt* by Ann Jonas

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