



Playing with and exploring numbers in a variety of ways will engage children's interest and develop early maths skills, as they learn to recognise numbers in different contexts. The Number Stamping Stones will help develop children's numeral recognition and their understanding of what these numerals mean – 'how many' each number represents. They are also ideal for ordering numbers, building children's understanding of the number sequence to 10.

The Number Stamping Stones are accessible, playful, visual and tactile, with the numerals on the top painted to help children see which side to use for stamping. The straight sides and engraved dots on the side facing the child will enable them to position the stones correctly alongside each other.

A numbers game

Giving children the opportunity to explore the stones independently will increase their familiarity with the numerals and confidence identifying them:

- Offer the stones with playdough for children to have a go printing the numbers themselves, exploring how hard they need to press to make a clear imprint in the dough. Make the most of opportunities to talk about any numerals they recognise. Using the stones to make imprints in dough, clay, sand dough or cloud dough is also great for developing fine motor skills.
- Encourage children to run their finger over the number shape on the stones and the imprint in the dough, and talk about what they feel like. You might like to model correct number formation by running your finger around the number shape and encouraging children to copy this.



- You might like to offer just one number stone along with various other resources showing the same numeral, such as number pebbles, animals with numerals on them or resources shaped like numerals (such as wooden numbers, mirror numbers etc). Children might like to squash these into playdough alongside imprints made using the number stone.
- Children might enjoy using several stones to stamp a really big number (perhaps in the millions) and asking you to tell them what it is!
- Print off the match & tidy mat from the Yellow Door website to keep track of the stones and encourage number recognition as children match the numerals.

Count me in

The stones are ideal for creating a label alongside a collection of items the children can count, helping them to link the concept of 'how many' with the corresponding numeral:

- When you're exploring one number in depth, offer groups of the same number of a variety of objects (such as animal figures, stars, vehicles, etc) and encourage children to count them and stamp the number representing them.
- Alternatively, children could stamp the number stone, then count out the right number of items to match. They might enjoy squashing small items (such as pebbles, beads or pasta shapes) into a piece of playdough alongside the stamped number.



- Extend this by including different numbers, such as 3, 4 and 5 – talk about which group has the least/most items and which is one more/one less. You might like to offer a piece of dough with four pieces of pasta, another with four beads and another with five beads, and ask children which are the same number (rather than the same items) – then ask them to stamp the numbers alongside to reinforce which are the same amount.
- Offer a range of resources showing numbers in a variety of ways (such as numerals, arrays or beads pushed into a piece of playdough in a random arrangement) and encourage children to match the number stone stamper to all the resources that show the same number.

Add to the fun

The number stones are ideal for exploring one more/one less, as you can easily stamp over a number to update it with a new one:

- Offer small items that children will enjoy squashing into playdough, such as pebbles, small stars, beads, pasta shapes or large sequins. Ask them to squash a certain number of items into a piece of dough, then stamp the corresponding numeral alongside using the number stone. What happens if they add one more – how many are there now? Stamp the new number over the top. What happens if they take one away, so there is one less? Again, stamp again using the new number.





- When you sing counting down songs, use the stampers, figures and playdough to visually represent the idea of 'one less' and the corresponding numerals. For example, at the start of Five Little Ducks, show a piece of playdough with five duck figures in it or five duck shapes stamped using Let's Roll Pond Life. Ask children to identify how many ducks there are and which number stone they need to stamp the right number. When one duck fails to swim back, take away one of the duck figures (or squash the stamped duck shape to remove it), count how many are left and find the number stone you need to stamp over the top. Keep going until none are left and use the zero number stamp at the end – to give children experience of zero.

- Encourage other imaginative scenes or stories when one thing is added or taken away. This could be lost toys, children arriving at a party, food being eaten or snowflakes melting (you could use the snowflake stamp from Let's Roll Seasons to make snowflake imprints in playdough). Count how many items there are to begin with and stamp the corresponding number in playdough. Each time something appears or disappears, count again and stamp the new number.

In sequence

The number stones are also ideal for exploring number sequences and counting in twos:

- Stamp a sequence of numbers leaving one missing for children to fill in.
- Stamp a number sequence with one number in the wrong place, such as 4, 5, 2, 7, 8. Can the children find the correct number and stamp it over the top to correct the wrong number?
- Work together to build up the sequence of numbers from zero to ten by stamping them into playdough. You might ask questions about whether the number two is closer to zero or ten.



- Stamp to create a sequence of numbers counting in twos. You could leave one missing and ask children to fill it in. Children may notice that the stones they use for counting in two are a different shade to the remaining stones – you can use this to talk about odd and even numbers.
- When you move on to two-digit numbers, you can stamp a one for the tens and a zero for the ones, then stamp over the top of the zero with a one, a two etc. This illustrates how from 10 to 19, the tens stay the same, and the ones change as one more is added.

- Count in tens, this time keeping the zero the same, but stamping over the left-hand digit to show the tens changing.
- Extend the learning using the operands for simple addition and subtraction. You might like to start with three beads squashed into playdough, then the addition sign, then two beads, then the equals sign. How many beads should follow the equals sign?
- When you introduce part-whole models, the stones can be used with small pieces of dough to create a tactile version. You might like to roll thin strands of dough for the connecting lines, or stamp all three numbers in a single piece of dough and mark the lines using a thin stick.



Counting songs

Baa baa black sheep

Five little speckled frogs

Five little ducks

Five little monkeys

Five currant buns

Five little men in a flying saucer

Ten in the bed

Ten green bottles

Ten fat sausages

Get talking – useful words

Stamp, press harder, groove, number, how many, most, least, one more, one less, same, add, take away, equals.

Books about counting

Ten Cats by Emily Gravett

None the Number: A Counting Adventure by Oliver Jeffers

Ten Delicious Teachers by Ross Montgomery

One Fox: A Counting Book Thriller by Kate Read