

10 Frame Activities

1. Make a number

This is one of the best ways for young children to use a ten frame, and probably the best way to start. Get them to make a number! Eg. 4. There are so many different ways to make 4. Get, for example, four stones, and then experiment with a variety of formations. Children like comparing and copying their friends. This activity helps them visualise what a number actually looks like in its many manifestations.

2. Make number bonds

If you fill a ten frame, you can't help but make a number bond to ten. If you only use two types of object, this becomes even better because you then have pairs of numbers to make bond. For example, you might have 6 sticks and 4 stones. The adult can provide the maths vocabulary into this simple exploration – 'How many have you got altogether? You've got 6 add 4 more etc'.

3. Grab two numbers!

This is a good fun way of beginning to add on a ten frame. Have two types of objects in a pile, for example red jewels and blue jewels. Take a handful of each and then place them on the ten frame. You might get three red and four blue. How many have you got altogether? This is a great way to begin simple adding. It works best if you have an object that children can only pick up about two to five of so that they don't overfill the frame.

4. Make patterns

Ten frames are a great way to create patterns. The simplest is a 1:1 pattern, for example one pine cone, one conker, one pine cone, one conker... There are other ways to make patterns on ten frames. You can easily make a 2:2 pattern by putting the same item above the other.

5. Doubling

Doubling is a very visual skill, and ten frames are perfect for achieving it. Simply, whatever you put in one line of the ten frame, put exactly the same in the bottom line. You then have two of whatever you originally had. Again, the adult can provide the maths vocabulary, such as 'double', 'two lots of', and 'altogether.'

6. Symmetry

Two ten frames placed next to each create a host of additional learning opportunities. My favourite of these is symmetry. Whatever you put on one frame, copy it 'mirror-fashion' on the other. This can be quite hard for children to grasp, and it is a good idea to place something in the middle of the two frames, like a line or a stick. Then show them how to walk your fingers outwards from the middle line, and whatever you find on one side copy on the other.

A simpler way to do this is to put a mirror next to a ten frame you have made. Children can explore what the reflection of the ten frame looks like.

7. Match numeral to quantity

For this you will need some number cards, number stones, or some materials for children to write their own numbers. Get them to put an amount in the frame, and then place the correct number next to the frame.