

Maths: Subitising

Young children have a remarkable skill: they can recognise numbers of things without counting. Young children also have powerful visual memories and some may find it easier to remember images than words: three-year-olds can recognise three things, although they may not say the word. Subitising can help children to build images for numbers, to visualise and to learn number facts. Structured images like this also help children to begin to see numbers inside numbers, for instance seeing four and one within five.



How do you teach subitising?

Children's ability to subitise can be developed by teaching. Games provide repeated experience of interpreting the dot images. For children who are unfamiliar with dot images, dice can be adapted to just show numbers up to three. Large dotty dice are good for outdoor games, like jumping along the track.