

Developing Counting at Ashfield Plaza Day Nursery

A case study from Early Years



Overview

Caroline Hunt is the Deputy Manager at Ashfield Plaza Day Nursery. Caroline took part in East Midlands West maths hub Counting Project in 2017/18. The counting collections have had a positive and fantastic impact and strengthened the children's interest with counting and numbers within the pre-school room. We've extended the planning what we do and added the collections to different areas of the room.

"The counting collections offer a fresh approach to the way children extend their basic number interest and knowledge"

The Counting Project at East Midlands West maths hub

The project aimed for practitioners to develop provision for counting in Early Years mathematics within their school/setting environment. It was intended that the children in the project settings would display higher levels of involvement in counting activities and communicate their counting strategies in a way that is observable by adults. It was hoped that project settings would develop practice underpinned by a clear knowledge of counting principles (particularly related to cardinality) and that setting practitioners would feel more confident in how to support children's early counting.

What we did at Ashfield Plaza Day Nursery

Firstly, Caroline adapted the provision and made space for the new counting collections to be put into place within the pre-school area. She introduced one counting collection to a small group of children through an adult-led activity each week for a period of six weeks then adapted it to one counting collection per child following the child's lead and closely worked with the children with this encouraging different ways of sorting and organising the collections they were counting.

The children are now offered a counting collection in a different area of pre-school each week and this is added onto the weekly planning, the children choose an individual collection and decide what the objects will be counted into (cups, bowls, frames, bags) and how they will record the amount, this has had a positive impact and increased the social working between the children and a great way to group items to get an altogether total and increase the child's unitary counting.

What the children did...

The children showed a great interest within the new collections. With adult support the children choose a collection and then count and record the total. They move onto the next collection and continue with different amounts. The children use white boards and pens, as well as ten frames and number lines to record the collection amounts.

Adults encouraged the children to bring in homemade collections into pre-school to work alongside the collections already being used. The children brought in a diverse range of collections. These ranged from bottle tops, shells, mini torches, bouncy balls and feathers.

The collections are set out in a different area of pre-school each day to keep the interest with the collections. Ashfield Plaza Day Nursery have used themed collections, for example using shells in the building site alongside the sand and buckets. Children open up discussion daily on how they will record their collection total (with adult support).



“I like the little ladybirds counting the spots” Sarah,
age 4.

“The shells are my favourite counting Collection”,
Samantha, age 3



Summary and next steps

Ashfield Plaza Day Nursery: The counting collections have had a huge impact on early maths for the pre-school children within Ashfield Plaza. We will continue to add to our collections and show new ways to develop the children’s interest with these within our setting.

If you are interested in engaging in similar work with East Midlands West maths hub...

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