



COUNTING THINGS THAT FLY

DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD



ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY:

Help your child learn to count, classify, and collect simple data by keeping a running record of things they see flying while outside, such as birds, bugs, airplanes, or blowing leaves.

As they observe, encourage them to notice which things are living and nonliving and talk about how they move or behave.

Encourage your child to count what they notice and sort their observations into groups, such as "living" and "nonliving" or "flies high" and "flies low."

STEM LEARNING AREA:

Life Science: Concepts related to living things

- **Living Things:** Animals, including insects and people, and plants

Math: Concepts related to numbers, patterns, shapes, and space, and how to use them to solve problems

- **Counting:** Communicating number words in order and matching each number to objects to find out "how many"
- **Classification & Data Analysis:** Sorting things into groups and then figuring out how many are in each group to help answer questions

WHAT DO I NEED?:

- Pencil and paper
- Counters (sticks, pebbles)



WHAT CAN I TALK ABOUT?:

- Living Things: Bugs, Birds
- Non-living Things: Kites, Planes, Helicopters
- Sky
- Counting and Numbers
- Compare and Contrast
- Sorting

WHAT CAN I ASK?:

- What things do you see flying in the sky?
- How are birds like planes? How are they different?
- How are birds like bugs? How are they different?
- How many of each thing do you see in the sky?



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ADAPTATIONS FOR DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this suggested playtime activity. These are only suggested activity adaptations. Consider consulting your child's care team first.



Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.



Answer your child's questions. If you do not know the answer, work together with your child to discover the answer.



Encourage your child to participate in the activity as much as possible. Praise your child's efforts and successes.

ENVIRONMENT

- If possible, limit background noise & distractions
- Wear sunglasses and hat if sensitive to bright light
- Set up area with a clear view of the sky
- Put data collection materials within reach

MATERIALS

- Have child's assistive technology ready and available, including augmentative & alternative communication (AAC) device or power wheelchair
- Use a large pencil that is easier to grasp or has a writing gripper
- Consider using counters (sticks, pebbles) instead of paper and pencil
- For children with physical disabilities with fine motor or grasping needs, consider using tools and assistive devices (tablet to take data)

INSTRUCTION

- Use a variety of methods of communication (sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage children
- Model counting aloud and taking data and help the child imitate
- Provide prompts and visual cues (see following pages) to help the child observe and classify



Need visual cues?

Visit [STEMIE's Visual Cue Library](#) or check out STEMIE's tips for creating and using visual supports with [A Guide to Visual Supports](#).

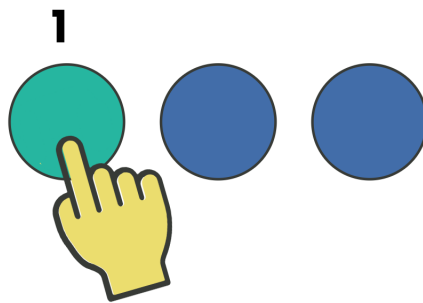


COUNTING THINGS THAT FLY

VISUAL CUES FOR DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD



How many



Count



1

One



2

Two



3

Three



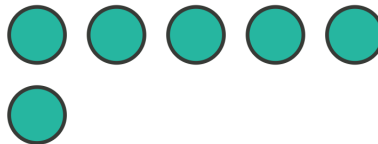
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Four



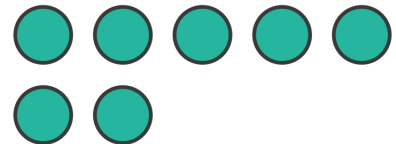
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Five



6

Six



7

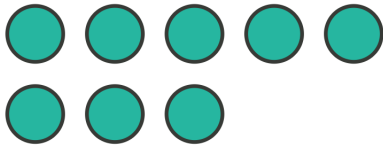
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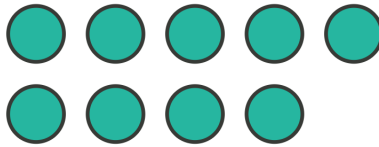
VISUAL CUES FOR DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

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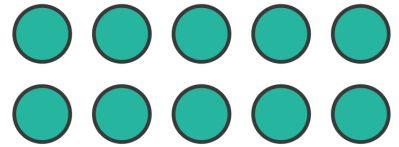
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Nine

10



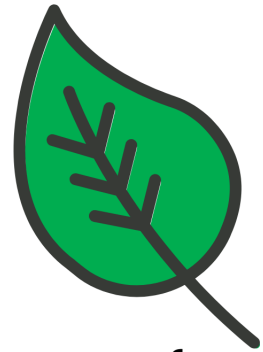
Ten



Birds



Insects



Leaf



Airplane



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ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- Collect objects outside (leaves, grass, rocks) and have the child predict whether they will fly or not. Test it out, and record the outcome!
- Encourage your child to document their observations through creative arts and crafts (take/draw pictures)
- Check out our [Discovery Play Activity](#) for Paper Airplanes
- Check out these great books about birds:
 - *Bird Count* by Susan Edwards Richmond
 - *Hello, World! Birds* by Jill McDonald
 - *Birding for Babies: Backyard Birds: A Numbers Book* by Chloe Goodhart
- Check out these great books about bugs:
 - *The Backyard Bug Book for Kids* by Lauren Davidson
 - *Bugs* by Britta Teckentrup
 - *Little Wonders Bugs* by Rose Nestling
- Check out these great books about planes:
 - *The Big Book of Airplanes* by DK
 - *Amazing Airplanes* by Tony Mitton & Ant Parker
 - *Airplanes: Soaring! Diving! Turning!* By Patricia Hubbell

