

# Counting with the Number Rods

**Purpose:** To introduce a child to the quantities and names of numbers 1-10 in sequence. This activity aims to teach that numbers represent quantities, and that a quantity is made up of units added together while sensorially introducing the decimal system.

**Directions:** for this activity, the child will carry the Number Rods from the math shelf to the mat starting with the shortest rod. The four shortest rods are carried to the mat one at a time, using one hand. The child will carry each of the longer rods individually and vertically in front of the body where it can be seen. The rods are placed randomly and horizontally on the mat, not touching each other. The child will begin to order the Number Rods into a stair by first placing the longest rod at the top of the mat with the red segment on the left. The next longest rod is to be placed below the first rod so that the red segment is flush left. The child will continue building the stair, placing each rod so that a red segment is on the left and aligning the rest of the rods flush left. With a teacher, the child will begin to name the rods starting with the shortest rod and isolating it on the mat in front of the child. The teacher will use their two primary fingers and point to the rod and say "This is one. One." The child will also use their two primary fingers, touch the rod and say "One." The teacher will select the 2-rod and place it on the mat above the 1-rod, point to it with their two primary fingers and say "This is two. Two." The teacher will place their fingers on the first segment of the 2-rod and say "One.", then place their fingers on the second segment and say "Two." The child will be invited to count the rod by touching each segment and say "One, two." These steps are repeated for the rest of the remaining rods. The teacher will continue with the recognition, "show me" phase to confirm that the child has learned the quantities and names, for example, "Show me three.", "Pick up two.", "Point to one." When the child is ready the teacher will proceed to the recall, "what is" phase by pointing to a rod and asking "What is this?" to confirm the child has mastered the concept. At the end of the lesson the rods are returned to the stair formation. When the child has finished working with the Number Rods, they will return the material to the math area, starting with the longest rod.

## Extensions:

Playing the "Please Bring Me" Game:

After building the Number Rods into a stair on the mat, wait for the child at a distance from the mat and ask the child to bring you a specific Number Rod. When the child returns with the rod, ask the child to count it and confirm that it is correct.

Learning to Discriminate Quantities:

Invite the child to compare quantities by selecting two rods, counting the segments on each rod and asking the child to point to the rod that is longer; invite the child to count how many more units the longer rod is.

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