

Introduce zero

Notes and guidance

In this small step, children are introduced to the concept of zero. They will already have some practical understanding of 'nothing there', 'none' or 'all gone'.

Here, they learn that the number name 'zero' and the numeral 0 can be used to represent this idea. Throughout this small step, support children to notice where they see 'zero'. For example, they may notice zero cookies on a plate or see zero leaves on a tree. They can also then be introduced to finding and recognising the numeral in the classroom and outdoor environment.

Provide frequent opportunities in planned activities, as well as in provision inside and out, to apply this understanding (for example, noticing that there are zero children playing in the sand).



Rhymes

- *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*



Books

- *Zero is the Leaves on the Tree* by Betsy Franco

Key questions

- Where can you see zero _____?
- Where can you see the numeral zero?
- How many can you see?
- How can you make this amount into zero?

Possible sentence stems

- I can see zero _____ .
- There are zero _____ .
- I know this is zero because...
- I know this is not zero because...

Links to the curriculum

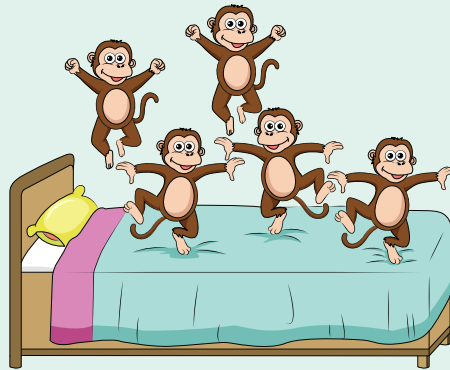
- *Development Matters* – Reception – Link the number symbol (numeral) with its cardinal number value.
- *Birth to 5 Matters* – Range 5
 - Begin to recognise numerals 0 to 10
 - Links numerals with amounts up to 5 and maybe beyond

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Adult-led learning



Use popular counting back songs such as *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*. Encourage children to take on the role of the five monkeys using props such as monkey ears.



Represent each verse with counters on a five frame, displaying the numerals alongside. Emphasise that when we get to zero, there are no monkeys left to jump.

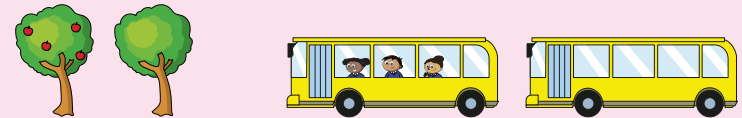


Share stories such as *Zero is the Leaves on the Tree* by Betsy Franco. Encourage children to notice where they see zero.

Children can create their own pages for a class book to represent zero in different ways.



Provide images showing familiar numbers alongside zero to support children's understanding that zero represents the absence of something.



Can children say when images show zero and not zero?



Go on a 'zero hunt' around school or in the local environment.



Prompt children to notice where they see zero. Encourage children to take photographs of the examples they find.



How many different examples of zero can they find? Where can they see the numeral '0'? Does it always mean there are zero items there?