

Observation prompts: eyfs.ma.patterns.2

eyfs.ma.patterns.2 Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity.

Look for

- Lines up two groups of objects one to one (for example 5 shells against 3 shells) to see which has more, rather than judging by how spread out a group looks.
- Points to, or moves aside, the object left over after matching two groups, to show which group has more or fewer.
- Uses real objects, a number line to 10 or a ten frame during play to compare two groups and work out who has more or fewer in a game.
- Takes away or adds objects to one of two lined-up groups (for example turning 6 against 4 into two groups that match) to make the groups the same.
- Compares two numerals up to 10 on dice, dominoes, number cards or door numbers in role play, and picks out the one that shows more.
- Re-lines up a group that has been spread out or moved before comparing it with another group, showing they know spreading out does not change how many there are.

Listen for

- "There's more over here" or "this one's got fewer" while matching two groups one to one.
- "5 is more than 3" or "3 is fewer than 5" when comparing two lined-up groups.
- "4 and 4 are the same" when two matched groups have nothing left over.
- "8 is 2 more than 6" while comparing two sets during a game.
- "I need 1 more to make it the same as yours" while adjusting a group of 9 to match a group of 10.
- "7 is 5 more than 2" or similar, when asked how many more one group has than another.

Next steps

- Not yet secure: give lots of practice lining up two small groups (up to 5) one to one with real objects (conkers, cars, children's own shoes), always checking for a leftover to decide which group has more or fewer.
- Not yet secure: for children learning English or needing visual support, pair the words more than, fewer than and the same as with gesture (hands showing a longer or shorter line) and matching mats so the comparison is seen as well as heard.
- Not yet secure: play simple same or different games where the child physically moves objects to make two groups match, talking through what they added or took away.
- Secure and ready to extend: ask how many more or how many fewer one group has than another once groups are lined up (for example 8 against 6 is 2 more), encouraging the child to count the gap rather than recount both groups.
- Secure and ready to extend: introduce comparing with numerals to 10 alone, without objects to count (number cards, dice, scores in a game), so the child compares the numeral value directly.
- Secure and ready to extend: give three groups to compare at once in continuous provision (for example in the garden or small world play), asking the child to put them in order and say which is more than, fewer than or the same as another.