

Continuous provision: Comparing quantities to 10

Maths area

A 'comparing line' station in the maths area: two washing lines (or lengths of ribbon pegged between two chairs) stretched at child height, side by side, each with a row of pegs. Children peg small objects onto the two lines one peg at a time, lining the objects up exactly opposite each other, so they can see at a glance which line has more, which has fewer, or whether the lines are the same. Numeral cards sit in a pot nearby so children can label each line once they have compared.

Resources

- Two washing lines or ribbons fixed at child height, with pegs
- Pots of small matching objects for pegging on, such as socks, little bears, shells, pompoms or paper leaves, in sets of at least 10 of each kind
- Numeral cards 0 to 10, large and clear
- Word cards showing 'more than', 'fewer than' and 'the same as', with a simple picture cue for each
- Two hoops or trays for children who prefer to line objects up on the floor or table instead of pegging
- Small trays or baskets to carry the chosen objects to the line
- A large arrow card or two toy hands pointing, for children to show which line has more
- A small mirror-image pair of puppets or soft toys (for example two bears) so children can 'peg for' each toy's group

When you join the play

- Shall we peg one for your line and one for mine, so we can see which has more?
- Amara has 5 shells on her line and Noah has 3 on his — whose line has more? Whose has fewer?
- How many more does Priya's line need so the two lines are the same?
- Can you line them up exactly opposite each other, so we can really see?
- Which numeral card shall we put under this line? Which one goes under that line?
- Jakub's line has 6 pegs and Leila's has 4 — is that the same as, more than, or fewer than?
- What could we do to make both lines the same as each other?

Look for

- Children lining objects up one-to-one opposite each other, rather than judging by how long or spread out a line looks
- Children using the words 'more than', 'fewer than' or 'the same as' without an adult prompting first
- Children saying 'fewer', not 'less', when talking about countable objects
- Children matching the correct numeral card to each line after counting it
- Children working out how many more or fewer one line has than the other, by counting the gap
- Children adjusting one line (adding or removing pegs) to make the two groups the same

- Children checking their comparison is correct by counting both lines again

Construction

A building site in the Construction area where two 'building teams' (small-world figures, or the children themselves) collect blocks, bricks or vehicles and line their sets up side by side, one to one, to find out who has more, fewer or the same, then check with numerals to 10.

Resources

- Wooden blocks and bricks in two colours or two trays, enough to make sets up to 10
- Small-world construction vehicles (diggers, trucks, cranes) in two matching sets
- Builder figures wearing hard hats, in pairs for one-to-one matching
- Two long building mats or planks marked with a line, for lining bricks up one to one
- Numeral cards 0 to 10 to label each team's tower or line of bricks
- Word cards: more than, fewer than, the same as
- Loose parts for building (corks, bottle tops, tyres) sorted into two baskets
- Two toy garages or car parks with numbered bays, for parking vehicles one to one
- Clipboards and chunky pencils for marking how many each team used

When you join the play

- Let's line your bricks up next to mine, one next to one, so we can see who has more.
- You've got 6 bricks and I've got 4. Can we check: is 6 more than 4, or fewer?
- How many more bricks would I need to make my tower the same as yours?
- Let's park the trucks in the bays one by one. Are there more trucks or more bays?
- Which numeral card matches how many bricks are in your line?
- Your tower looks taller, but does it have more bricks? Let's line them up to be sure.
- Can you find a team with fewer vehicles than yours?

Look for

- Children lining bricks, blocks or vehicles up one to one to compare, rather than judging by height or spread
- Children using the words more than, fewer than or the same as during their building play
- Children checking two towers or lines of bricks and saying when they are the same
- Children matching a numeral card to a set they have built, up to 10
- Children working out how many more bricks are needed to make two sets equal
- Children spotting a mismatch when parking vehicles in numbered bays and adjusting the sets

Small world

Turn the small world area into a farm with two paddocks side by side, set up so children naturally line up animals one to one to compare how many are in each paddock, then rebuild the groups to make them the same.

Resources

- A farm mat or tuff tray divided into two paddocks, side by side
- Two kinds of small world farm animals (e.g. sheep and horses, ducks and hens) in differing quantities up to 10
- Short lengths of ribbon or masking-tape lines laid across each paddock, so one animal can stand on each line for one-to-one lining up
- A set of low fence pieces or lollipop-stick fences for splitting a paddock into single spaces
- Numeral cards 0 to 10
- Small trays or baskets for moving animals in and out of a paddock
- Word cards or arrow signs showing 'more than', 'fewer than' and 'the same as'
- A pot of stones, shells or buttons as extra counters for topping up a smaller group

When you join the play

- Shall we line your sheep up next to my horses, one animal on each line, so we can see which paddock has more?
- You've got 5 sheep and I've got 3 horses, lined up one to one. 5 is more than 3 - so 3 is fewer than 5. How many more horses would I need to catch up?
- Let's line up the ducks and the hens one to one. There are 7 ducks and 2 hens - 7 is more than 2, and 2 is fewer than 7.
- Can you make the horses' paddock the same as the sheep's paddock? What do you need to add or take away?
- Which numeral card matches the number of animals in this paddock? Can you find the card for the other paddock too?
- Point to the paddock with fewer animals in it. How do you know, just by looking at the lines?
- If 4 and 4 are the same, what would we see if we lined them up one to one?

Look for

- Child lines two groups of animals up one to one to compare them, rather than judging by how spread out a group looks
- Child uses the words 'more than', 'fewer than' or 'the same as' during their own play
- Child says 'fewer' rather than 'less' when talking about countable animals
- Child adds or removes animals from a paddock to make two groups the same
- Child matches a numeral card correctly to a group of animals up to 10
- Child who is learning English or has SEND points, gestures or uses the lined-up rows to show which group has more, without needing to say the words
- Child can say how many more or fewer one paddock has than the other

Outdoors

An outdoor 'delivery yard' on the decking or playground: two long chalk lines are drawn next to each other, like two train tracks, so that whatever a child sets out on one line can be matched directly against the other line, object for object. Crates of natural loose parts for 'parcels' sit alongside a trolley or wheelbarrow, so children fill two delivery crates with up to 10 items each, then line the

parcels up one to one along the chalk tracks to see which crate has more, fewer or the same as the other.

Resources

- Two long chalk lines drawn parallel to each other on the playground or decking, for lining parcels up one to one
- A wheelbarrow or small trolley for moving crates between the mud kitchen, the garden and the delivery yard
- Two matching delivery crates or shallow trugs
- Natural loose parts to use as parcels: pinecones, conkers, large pebbles and shells (enough for two groups of up to 10)
- Numeral pegs or flags labelled 0 to 10, to peg onto the chalk line next to each group
- Two hoops, for children who want to group parcels inside a hoop instead of on the chalk line
- A set of 'order slips' showing dots (not numerals) from 0 to 10, for children to copy how many parcels a delivery needs
- Chunky chalk in a tin, for children to draw their own extra tracks or mark a tally

When you join the play

- You've got a crate for the shells and a crate for the pinecones — shall we line them up on the tracks so we can see which crate has more?
- Let's put one pinecone under one conker, one under one conker, all the way along. Are there any left over on this side?
- This line has 6 and this line has 4. Which one is fewer than the other?
- How many more conkers would this crate need to have the same as that crate?
- Can you find the numeral peg that matches how many parcels are in the wheelbarrow?
- If we add 1 more shell to this group, will it still be fewer than the other group, or will it be the same as it now?
- Your friend says this group looks like it has more because it's spread out along the track — let's check by lining them up one to one to be sure.
- You've got 8 parcels and your friend has 8 parcels too. What could we say about those two groups?

Look for

- Children physically lining the two groups up one to one along the chalk tracks, rather than judging which group has more by how spread out or bunched up it looks
- Children using the words 'more than', 'fewer than' or 'the same as' when comparing their two crates or hoops
- Children saying 'fewer' rather than 'less' when talking about countable parcels such as pinecones or shells
- Children matching the correct numeral peg (0 to 10) to a group they have made
- Children working out how many more or fewer one group is than another, rather than just saying which is bigger

- Children adjusting a group to make it the same as another, for example adding or removing one parcel
- Children using the vocabulary spontaneously in their own play, for example when sharing out loose parts between two friends

Malleable (playdough)

Set up a playdough 'make and match' station on the tuff tray or a tabletop, with two matching builder's mats, each printed with a row of 10 joined circles. Children roll playdough balls, snails or fruits, press one onto each circle on their mat working left to right, then line their row up next to a friend's or an adult's row to compare the two groups one to one, using more than, fewer than and the same as.

Resources

- Playdough in several colours, enough for at least two children to work alongside each other
- Two large builder's trays or tuff trays
- Laminated mats, each showing a row of 10 joined circles numbered 1 to 10, for pressing one playdough piece into each circle
- Small rolling boards, lolly sticks and blunt modelling tools for making balls, snails, worms and fruit shapes
- Numeral cards 0 to 10
- Small pots or dishes to hold finished playdough pieces before lining them up
- Vocabulary cards showing the words more than, fewer than and the same as, each with a simple matching symbol

When you join the play

- You've made 5 playdough snails and I've made 3. Let's line yours up against mine, one next to one. Whose row has more?
- Your row stops next to my 3rd snail, so what can we say about your group and mine, using the word fewer?
- If I have 6 playdough worms and you have 4, how many more would you need to roll so we had the same as each other?
- Let's line up our fruits one to one. Don't guess from how spread out they look. Can you check by matching each one of mine to one of yours?
- You've got 8 and I've got 6. Which word do we use for my group: more than or fewer than yours?
- Can you roll a group that is the same as my group of 5? How will you check it's exactly the same?
- You made 7 and your friend made 2. Line them up together. Who has fewer, and how many fewer are there?

Look for

- Children line playdough pieces up one to one against another group, rather than judging which group is more by how long or spread out the row looks
- Children use the words more than, fewer than or the same as correctly when comparing their playdough group with another

- Children say 'fewer', not 'less', when talking about a smaller group they can count
- Children check carefully when two rows look close in length, matching piece to piece to decide if the groups are the same
- Children independently match a numeral card to a group they have made, from 0 to 10
- Children adjust their own group, adding or removing playdough pieces, to make it match, be more than or be fewer than another child's group

Role play shop

Turn the role play shop into a 'fruit and veg stall' with two shopping baskets at the counter so children fill customers' orders and compare what's in each basket by lining items up one to one, never by how spread out a basket looks.

Resources

- Two matching shopping baskets or trays for the counter
- Duplicate sets of pretend fruit and vegetables (apples, bananas, carrots, tomatoes), at least 10 of each kind
- Order cards showing a numeral (0 to 10) and a picture of the fruit or vegetable, for customers to hand to the shopkeeper
- Numeral cards 0 to 10 to peg above each basket
- A till, purses and play coins
- Shopping bags for customers to carry their order home
- A long strip of card or a row of floor spots to line items up one to one for comparing

When you join the play

- You've packed 5 apples and Priya's basket has 3 carrots. Let's line them up one to one against each other. Which basket has more?
- Is 5 more than 3, or is 5 fewer than 3?
- How many more apples would Priya need so her basket is the same as yours?
- Let's check by lining the fruit up in a straight line, not by looking at how spread out they are in the basket.
- Can you find the numeral card that matches how many are in your basket?
- Your basket and mine both have 4. Are they the same as each other, or is one more?
- The order card says 7. Can you count out 7 tomatoes for the customer?
- You have 6 bananas and the till tray has 9. Is 6 more than 9, or fewer than 9?

Look for

- Children lining two groups up one to one to compare them, rather than judging by how spread out or bunched up a group looks
- Children using the words 'more than', 'fewer than' and 'the same as' during their play
- Children matching a numeral card correctly to a counted quantity up to 10
- Children working out how many more or how many fewer one basket has than another
- Children saying 'fewer' rather than 'less' when comparing countable items

- Children adjusting a group by adding or removing items to make two groups the same