

Play the Blue Bean Counting Game

Take math off the page and into the real world by playing a counting game with lima beans painted blue and white. This simple game adds up to one thing: a fun way to practice early addition!

What You Need:

- Large lima beans
- Blue spray paint
- Small cup (3-ounce bathroom cups work well for this activity)
- Small index cards or sheets of paper
- Blue crayon
- Stapler or heavy string

What You Do:

1. Before starting the game, spray paint the lima beans on one side only. When you're finished, one side of each bean should be blue and the other side should be white.
2. Now play the game. Ask your child to place five beans in the paper cup, shake the cup to mix up the beans, and then toss the contents onto the table.
3. Give her the blue crayon and ask her to draw the total number of beans she sees on a piece of paper or index card, then color them in according to the beans' colors. For example, if your child's toss shows 4 beans facing blue side up, and 1 bean white side up, she should color 4 beans blue and leave one not colored in, or white.
4. Repeat step 3, encouraging her to continue tossing the five beans from the cup, until she thinks she's discovered all the ways to make 5.
5. Stack the pages or index cards and bind them together with string or staples to make a book showing all the different ways to make the number 5.



As your child's curiosity about numbers grows, adjust the game by changing the quantity of beans until you get all the way up to 10. Addition is big news in kindergarten, and this game can grow with her throughout the year. As she matures, ask her to write the addition sentence that matches each picture on its bottom, for example, $2 + 3 = 5$.