

Section 7.2

Understanding 'many' and 'few'

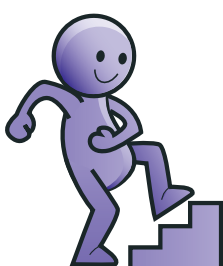


Why is this important?

These kinds of concepts can be tricky to learn, because there is no fixed quantity associated with them (e.g. a 'few' leaves on a tree may relate to a hundred leaves, whereas a 'few' biscuits left on a plate may only be three). These concepts/words are abstract – they can't be seen or touched in the same way as a concrete object like a fork can.

What to do

- Draw a scene on a big piece of paper or photocopy one out of a book (e.g. a playground/park/classroom/street/room of house).
- Think of things that belong in the scene (e.g. if your scene is the park, you might include trees, ducks, swings, flowers, children, bikes).
- Create cards to depict 'many' and 'few' of each of the objects (e.g. 'many' trees on one piece of card and a 'few' trees on another).
- Put out the scene with the two matching objects and ask the child to:
 - ★ 'Put many trees in the park.'
- Can the child choose the correct picture and place it on the big picture?
- Continue presenting extra cards as you would in a matching game, putting 'many' with 'many' and 'few' with 'few'. N.B. You could use Blu-Tack to stick the smaller pictures on.
- Do the same for the other pairs of objects (e.g. 'many'/'few' ducks).



Step up

- Encourage the child to begin to use the concepts to describe objects in the environment.
- Reverse the roles in the above activity so the child is telling you which objects to place in the scene.
- Sort pictures of 'many'/'few' where the child generates the concepts for himself/herself.

Step down

- Start by introducing all the objects with 'many' (e.g. 'many' ducks, 'many' trees). Ask the child to find 'many' ducks.
- Collect together objects in the home and sort them into groups of 'many' and 'few' (e.g. 'many' pencils, 'few' spoons).
- Linking the word 'many' to other concepts that the child knows may help (e.g. 'more', 'lots', 'most').
- Talk about 'many' and 'few' during everyday routines (e.g. 'many' peas/beans on the child's plate but a 'few' fish fingers).
- Match pictures of 'many' and 'few'.

