

Math Activity: The Hoop Game

This game played with a hula hoop and bean bags demonstrates all the math that can be explored with a simple tossing game. Each round gives children practice seeing and naming smaller parts of a total number in a variety of ways.



Why is this Important?

- When children play the Hoop Game, they get to explore the part-part-whole relationships within a given number of beanbags. Taking apart and putting together numbers in flexible ways is an important foundation for later number operations.

Learning Target

- I can toss a small set of bean bags and quickly see and say the amount without counting and label the quantity of bean bags landing inside/outside a hula hoop or other defined space.

Materials

- Hula hoop (or other defined space on the floor)
- bean bags (or other small, easy to toss item, i.e. rolled up socks)
- tape to mark where to stand.
- (optional) paper with a circle to record toss results



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What you do

1. Children take turns standing at the tape line and tossing a small set of bean bags, one by one, into a hula hoop lying on the ground.
2. You may want to start with 3 bean bags per turn, then try 4, and then 5. Each child throws the whole set and then subitizes (says number without counting) and labels how many landed inside the hoop and how many landed outside the hoop.
3. Then, it is the next child's turn to toss the beans bags. There is no need to keep a running score; children will naturally compare round to round.
4. This game provides practice with decomposing small quantities. With practice, children will come to internalize the combinations that make 3, 4, and 5. You may want to provide a paper with a circle and ask children to record one or more of their tosses.



Not there Yet

- Start with fewer beanbags.
- Help child say number before and after tossing. For example, how many in your hand? How many landed inside the hoop? Outside?

Need a Challenge

- Increase the number of beanbags
- Add a second hoop and add for total amount in both

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