

Matching Cups

Use counting and comparing to find all pairs of cups that have the same number of objects hidden underneath them.

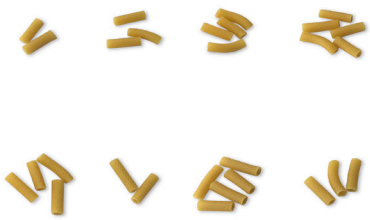
Materials

- 8 cups, glasses, or mugs that all look the same and are not see-through.

Paper or plastic cups work well.

- 28 small objects that can fit underneath the cups, like beans, buttons, or dried macaroni.

To start, choose 28 of the same objects. Small objects are choking hazards, so supervise children carefully.



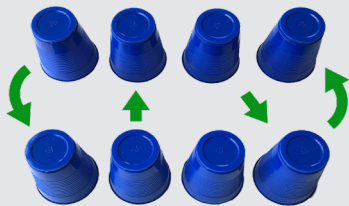
Step 1

On a flat surface, make two piles of 2 objects, two piles of 3 objects, two piles of 4 objects, and two piles of 5 objects. There will be 8 piles in all, and each cup should have a matching pair.



Step 2

Put a cup upside down over each pile so the objects are hidden underneath.



Step 3

Carefully slide the cups and objects underneath them around to mix up the order.



Step 4

Arrange the cups in two rows of four.



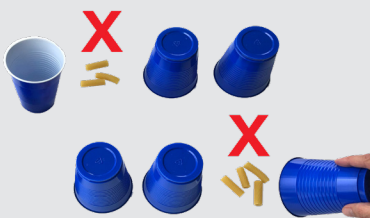
Step 5

Have your child turn over a cup. Ask: *How many are there?*



Step 6

With the first cup still turned over, have your child turn over a second cup. Ask: *How many are there? Are the piles the same or different? How do you know?*



Step 7

If the piles are the same (matching): Hooray! Your child can remove the two cups and piles of objects, and place them next to himself/herself.

If they are different (not matching): Try again! Your child puts the cups back over the piles.



Step 8

Keep playing until all the matching cups are found.

Tips for Having Math Conversations

- During setup, have your child help prepare the materials for the game. This is a fun way to practice counting! ***Can you count three to put under this cup? How many do I have here? Can you make a group with the same number of [objects]? You just made a group of three, what number comes after three? Can you make a group of four?***
- If your child makes a mistake while counting, that's OK! Encourage your child. ***Can you try again?***
- If your child counts an object twice or misses an object while counting, show them how you can put the objects in a line to count or move them aside while counting.
- If your child doesn't say the counting words in the right order, ask: ***Do you remember what number comes after... [name the last number they got right]?***
- You can always count with your child to help build confidence.

Activity Modifications

Once you have tried out the activity, here are some modifications you can do to keep the activity interesting and challenging.

Make It Easier

- Make smaller piles of objects (1-3 objects per cup).
- Include fewer cups (4-6 cups).
- After lifting the cup, write down the number of objects in the pile on a piece of paper next to the cup.

Make It Harder

- Use objects that are similar but not the same, such as beads or buttons of different colors and/or sizes.
- Use objects that are completely different.
- Make larger piles of objects (5-10 objects per cup).
- Include more cups (8-12 cups).