

## Numbers Clap



1-20 players

Ages 3+

5-10 minutes

Materials: Two hands

Goal of the game: to hear and recognize a number of claps, clap the same number of times, and label the number of claps with the correct number word.

Setup:


Get ready to clap!



Play:

Say, "Listen carefully! Can you clap the same number of times as me?"  
Clap twice.



Wait for children to clap twice using their own hands. 

Ask, "How many times did I clap?" Wait for children to answer.



Continue playing using different numbers of claps.

*Variation:* Ask children to jump, spin, or whistle the number of times that you clapped!

What children are learning:

- This game is fun and challenging because children have to remember three steps: first, listen to and count the number of claps; second, repeat the claps; and third, label the number of claps with the correct number name.
- You should focus this game on numbers under five until children are ready for a higher challenge.

## Numbers, Numbers, 1, 2, 3. How Many Do You See?



1-20 players

Ages 2+

5-10 minutes

Materials: fingers and hands

### GOAL of the game:

to immediately recognize  
finger combinations and to  
name how many fingers  
are being held up.

### VOCABULARY words:

numbers 1-10  
many (how many)  
same  
different

### QUESTION prompts:

What did you notice  
about the fingers I  
held up?

Can you show me a  
different way to make  
that many fingers?

### Setup:

Hold your hands behind your back



Play:

Chant, “Fingers, fingers, 1, 2, 3. How many do you see?” Hold up three fingers on one hand.



Wait for children to say “three” or show three using their own fingers.

Put your hands behind your back. Continue playing using different numbers of fingers. Start with 1-5 fingers. As children progress, move to 6-10 fingers on two hands.

Try to vary the ways you hold up your fingers! You can show three:

on one hand in different ways:



or using two hands:



*Variation:* Hold up a number of fingers on your hand(s) and ask children to hold up the same number of fingers in a different way!

What children are learning:

- This is a great game to play when you have just a couple of minutes.
- Numbers can be composed (made) in many different ways! You can make 5 with five fingers on one hand and zero on the other, or with four and one, or with three and two. These different combinations all make 5.
- This game helps children recognize that smaller numbers are part of larger numbers (e.g., that 3 and 1 are two parts of 4).

## Make 5! with Fingers



1-4 players

Ages 4+

5-10 minutes

Materials: Fingers and hands

Goal of the game: to combine fingers on two hands so that they add up to five.

Setup:

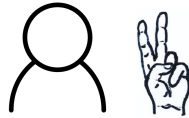
Hold your hands behind your back




Play:

Say, “Let’s work together to hold up five fingers in all. I’m going to hold up some fingers. Can you hold up the rest of the fingers we need to make five in all?”

Bring one hand forward and hold up two fingers.



Ask, “How many fingers am I holding up? How many more fingers do we need to make five?”

Wait for children to hold up three fingers. 

Say, “Yes! I am holding up two fingers, and three more makes 5!”

Put your hands behind your back. Continue playing using different combinations of fingers.

What children are learning:

- This game focuses on number composition – knowing that two smaller numbers make up a larger number. In this game, children are adding two smaller sets of fingers that together make five.
- Practicing number composition in preschool helps children’s math learning later on.
- It’s important for children to recognize that a quantity can be shown in different ways — with fingers, numerals, dots in different configurations, and more. Having practice playing with number in many forms helps to strengthen this concept.

## Same, One More, One Less with Fingers



1-20 players

Ages 3+

5-10 minutes

Materials: Fingers and hands

Goal of the game: to immediately recognize a number of fingers and to show the same number of fingers or the number +1 or -1.

Setup:

Hold your hands behind your back



Play:

Bring one hand forward and hold up three fingers. Say, “Can you hold up the same number of fingers as me?”



Wait for children to show three fingers.



Put your hands behind your back. Bring one hand forward and hold up one finger. Say, “Can you hold up one more finger than me?”



Wait for children to show two fingers.



Put your hands behind your back. Bring one hand forward and hold up five fingers. Say, “Can you hold up one less finger than me?”



Wait for children to show four fingers.



What children are learning:

- Talking about more, less, and same helps build math vocabulary. It also helps children understand the number line because they are practicing knowing which numbers come before and after each other.
- As children gain experience, have them take on the adult role!