

# Squirrel Grid Game



*Play-Based  
Meets DAP Guidelines  
Developed by  
Dr. Jenni Jacobs*

## About Me



Dr. Jenni Jacobs is the founder and CEO of The Learning Professor. She has been in the field of education for 25 years in a variety of roles, including family child care provider, infant/toddler teacher, preschool teacher, school age teacher, elementary teacher, educational director, college instructor, and instructional designer.

Her educational background includes a BSEd in PreK through 3rd grade education, a Master's in Child Development, and an EdD in Special Education, with a focus on content mastery and gamification.

Though she considers herself an early childhood generalist, her top areas of expertise include infant toddler development and curriculum, preschool development and curriculum, brain development, classroom management, and challenging behaviors. She tries to always blend theory along with good practice in all of her content to make it relevant and practical for teachers.

## About This Packet

This packet has been designed to provide concrete experiences for preschool children that align to standards of developmentally appropriate practice. As a result, you will not find worksheets for children to complete in this packet. What you will find are lots of play-based games that will teach children the concepts that are important for them to understand at this age level.

You'll receive an overview of the activity, instructions on getting the activity ready for children, a list of required materials, printable(s) if applicable, and teacher interaction tips.

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# Grid Game Instructions

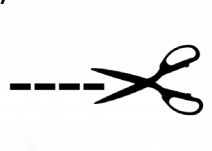
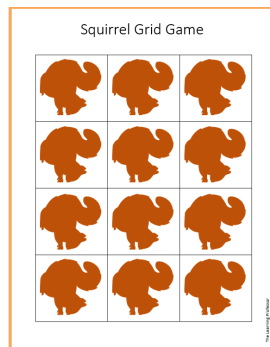
Grid games are a simple type of math game for preschoolers. They are designed for 2 children (or a teacher and a child) to play at a time.

Materials needed:

- 2 grid boards (1 for each child)
- 24 cover-up pieces (such as marble chips, milk cap lids, etc.)
- 1-2 baskets to put the cover-up pieces in
- 1 die (recommend making your own 1-3 or 1-4 die)
- Tray (if you want to put them on the manipulative shelf) or a table with 2 chairs

Getting Started:

1. Print out the game boards. You will want to print a total of two identical boards – 1 for each child. Cut them out to remove all of the white space surrounding the board. I recommend laminating the game boards for durability.

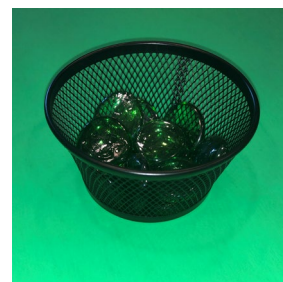


2. Gather your cover-up pieces. I generally use marble chips for most of my games unless I feel like getting fancy. You can generally find marble chips at a dollar store or craft store. It is important to choose a cover-up piece that will fit inside the square spaces on the game.



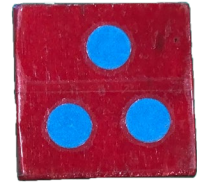
For this squirrel game, you might choose acorns, or you can just use something generic such as milk cap lids or marble chips. If you are buying pieces, make sure you buy a few extra in case some get lost! For this game, you will need 24 pieces. It's important to only put out the 24 pieces for the children so they don't get confused when they are trying to cover up their boards. This means that it's also important to make sure all of the pieces are there each day.

3. Find a container to put the cover up pieces in. You can find all sorts of attractive containers at dollar stores. I like to provide 2 containers for games like this....one for each child's pieces.



# Grid Game Instructions, Cont'd.

4. Make a die to use with the game. To do this, find/purchase a 1" cube. You may have some colored cubes already in the classroom. If not, you can buy a wooden cube from a craft store. It's ok to have a bigger cube, but I don't recommend having anything smaller. Put dots on the cube. You can draw them on with a permanent marker or you can use a hole punch to create them and glue them on. Cover the die with either tape or clear fingernail polish to keep children from picking the dots off.



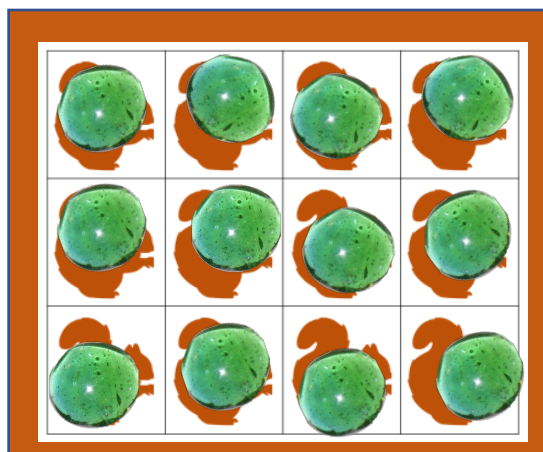
You will want to put 1 dot on 2 of the sides, 2 dots on 2 of the sides, and 3 dots on 3 of the sides.

Playing the game:

There are no specific rules for these games. I like to let children create with their own rules because I find that they will only create rules that match their own developmental level. How I play the game really depends on the level the child is at. Typically though, most children will play the game this way....and this is how I model the game when I play with them:

1. Adult rolls the die. Adult takes from the basket the number of acorns that match the dots on the die. Adult places 1 acorn on each squirrel.
2. Child repeats this process. If the child makes a mistake, rather than correcting the child, wait until it is the adults turn and then model that skill.
3. Play repeats until both players have covered their squirrels with acorns. Encourage players to continue playing/helping until both boards are covered. This eliminates the need to cheat to win.
4. When both boards are covered, players place the acorns back into the basket(s). Some children may use the die to take the acorns off the board in the same manner that they put them on the board.

If I am playing the game with a child who is not yet counting or even matching quantities, then I may just have the child practice putting one acorn on each squirrel. This reinforces the skill of 1:1 correspondence.



# Grid Game Instructions, Cont'd.

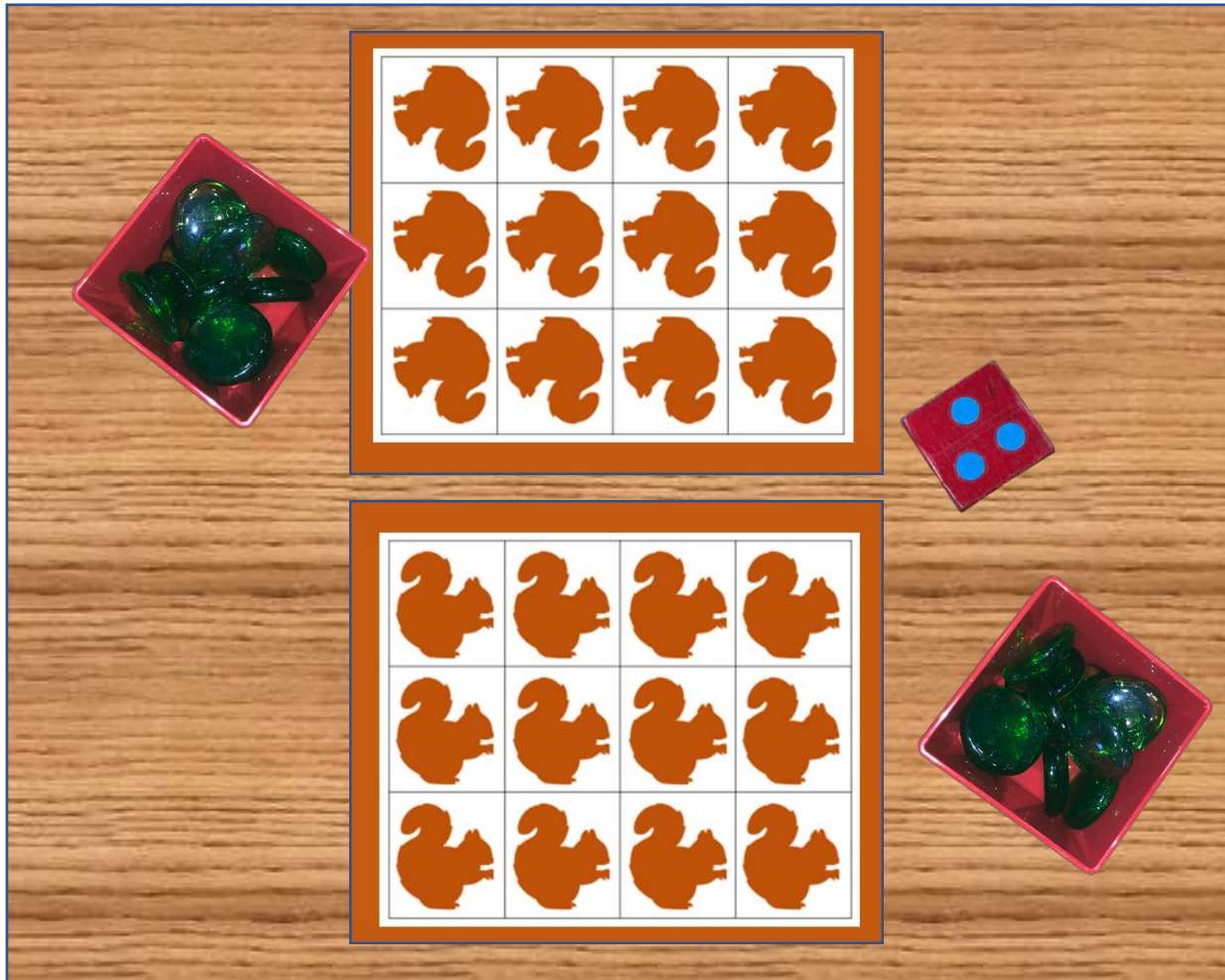
## Teacher Interactions:

Avoid always asking the child how many he/she has. Instead, ask questions that encourage thinking and problem solving and sound more conversational rather than like you are always testing the child. Here are some questions/comments that you might consider:

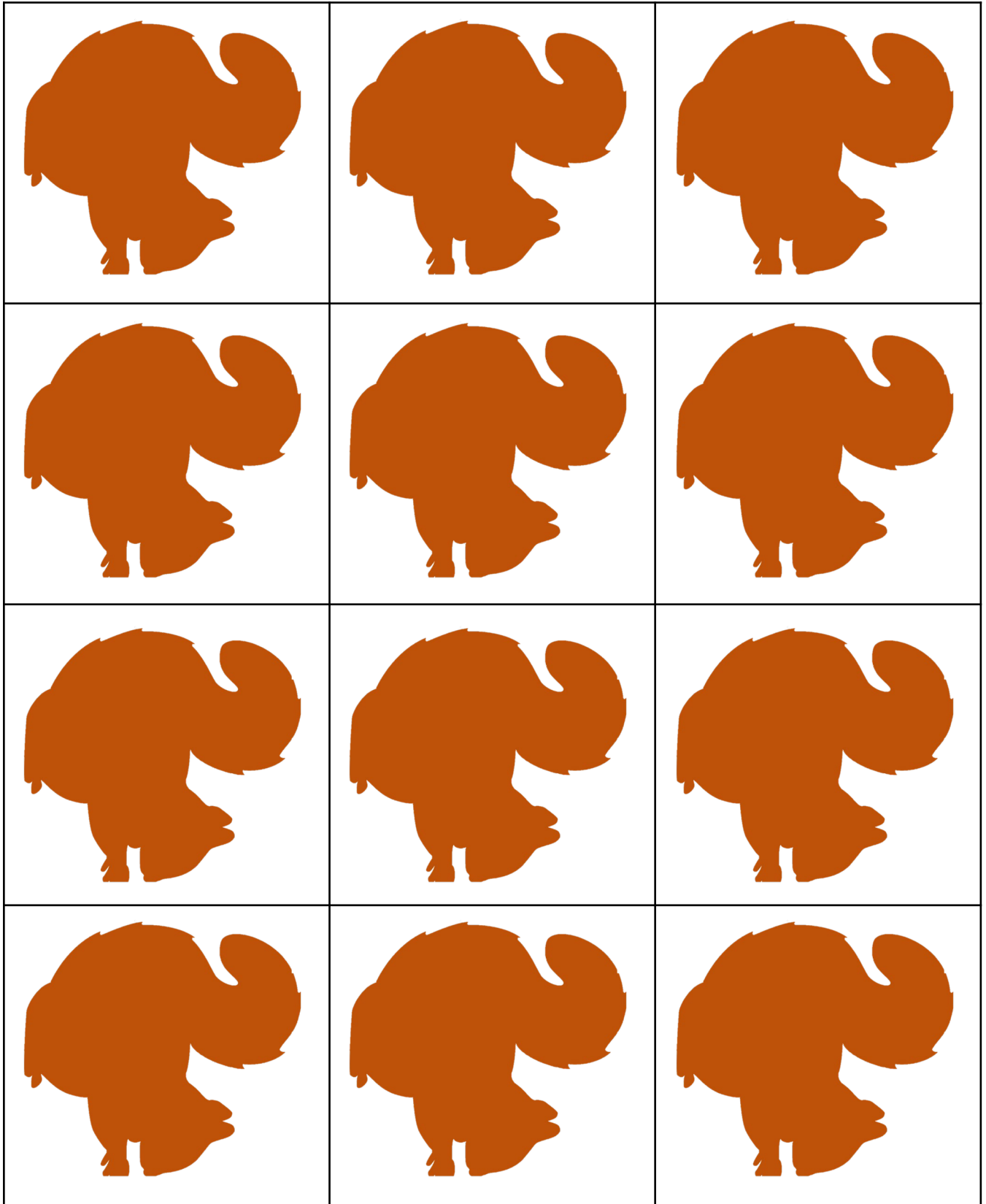
- Are there enough acorns so that each squirrel can have one?
- How many more acorns would you need if every squirrel on your board had two acorns?
- I rolled a three – 1, 2, 3.....I'm going to take 3 counters....1, 2, 3.
- Do we have the same amount of spaces covered?
- How many more spaces have you covered than I have?
- What do you need to roll in order to have all of your spaces covered up?

## Putting the game in your classroom:

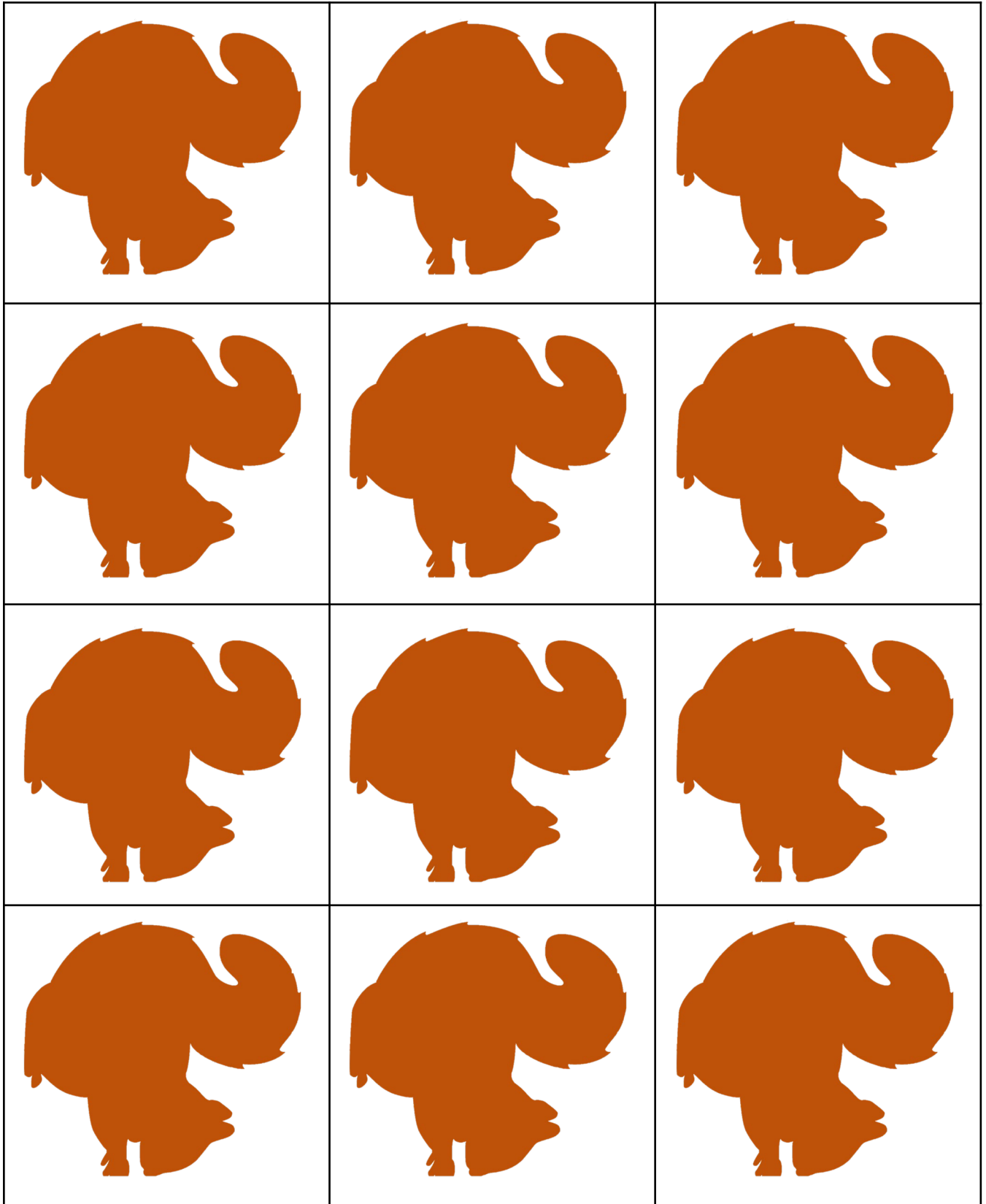
I generally like to put these types of games on a tray and place them on a shelf in the manipulative area. These games then become a choice during free choice time, and it's a great way to incorporate math into this area. The children take the games off the tray, sit across from one another and begin play. It is not uncommon for me to have 2 different trays of games on the shelf.



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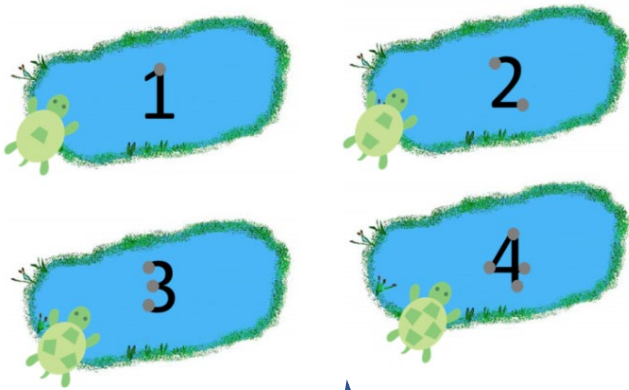
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## Count Me In: Encouraging Number Sense in Preschool



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### Description

In this course, we will cover the following topics:

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- Grid Games
- Short Path Games
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