

Bead strings are a fantastic resource to help introduce children to early number concepts.

- Introduce bead strings to children by having them tell you what they see/notice

- For example, *I see 5 **blue** beads*



- **Count** the beads by ones forwards (1 to 30) and backwards (30 to 1)
 - As children improve their counting skills practise counting forwards by fives, tens and twos

- Encourage children to **move** the beads as they count
 - This will help to develop 1 to 1 correspondence (i.e. one number name for one object)

- Use the beads to **represent numbers**

- **Show me 5** (Choose a different number)

- **How do you know you have 5?**

- Child may count the beads or make a statement like 4 and 1 makes 5 or I had 3 so I knew to get 2 more

- **Can you show me 5 another way?**

- 1 **blue** and 4 **yellow**



- 2 **blue** and 3 **yellow**



- 5 **blue** and zero **yellow**



As children get better at representing numbers encourage them to **move (or count) beads in groups**

- This will help to check if children **trust the count** (i.e. do children need to count each bead individually or can they count on, e.g. 5 and 5 more makes 10)
- For example, *to show 6, I move one group of 5 beads then 1 more*



Bead strings can also be used as number lines

- Here is ... where is ...
 - For example, *Here is 5, where is 6?*
- How do you know? (*5 is one more than 6*)

Use bead strings to introduce early addition and subtraction concepts

- I have ... how many more do I need to make ...?
 - For example, *I have 7, how many more do I need to make 10?*
- How do you know? (*I need 3 more as I count three more beads to make 10 or 8, 9, 10*)
- I started with ... now I have ... what is the difference?
 - For example, *I started with 5, now I have 3, what is the difference? (5 take-away 3 is 2)*

As children become more familiar with bead strings (or as they progress through school) **one bead does not need to represent one**

- For example, *if one bead is 3, how many is 10 beads (3 tens are 30)*

Tips to create **Bead Strings**

- Use beads of equal size, such as Pony Beads
- For the cord use a bead string or a shoe lace for easy threading
- Choose two colours (bead strings of many different colours can confuse children)
- Place groups of 5 or 10 beads together before changing colours – this helps children to count the beads
- Start with at least 30 beads on the string
- Tie a loop in the end for easy storage or display



Pony Beads can be purchased through most stationery, craft or discount stores.

Shoe laces make a great cord for bead strings as the end makes it easier for children to thread on the beads.

