



Activity Ideas

Stuart J. Murphy
MathStart®

Seaweed Soup

Matching Sets

Level 1 Ages 3+

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Understanding sets is an important step in counting and learning about patterns.

Turtle is such a generous and good friend that none of his buddies can say no when he invites them to lunch for a bowl of that “thick and green, gooey and slimy” delicacy: seaweed soup. Will he have enough matching place settings for everybody? Illustrated by Frank Remkiewicz.

DC Standard 4.1, Matching Sets, One-to-One Correspondence: Children will demonstrate a beginning understanding of number and operations and how they relate to one another. (4.1.1) Use one-to-one correspondence; (4.1.6) Recognize quantities of small groups up to 4.

- While reading the story together, ask the children what things each new character will need in order to eat lunch. As each new guest arrives, count the number of cups, spoons, napkins and bowls at the table. Discuss how each guest has 1 cup, 1 spoon and 1 napkin and 1 bowl.
- Plan a party (real or make-believe) with the children’s favorite soup as the main course. (The soup can also real or make-believe, like Orange Basketball Bubblegum soup – yum!) Have the children make up a guest list and figure out how many cups, spoons, napkins and bowls will be needed. To help them visualize, use paper or plastic cups, spoons and bowls.
- Get a package of plastic silverware (nothing too sharp!) and some plastic cups. Remove one of the forks and of the knives. Ask the children to make as many complete sets as they can. For the sets that come up short, what can they find around the room that could serve as a substitute? Be creative – just like Turtle! Try it again, only this time return the fork and take away two spoons and a cup.

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