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This guide is structured to maximize the product's educational value, moving from sensory exploration to structured numeracy exercises.

I. TACTILE NUMBER FORMATION (PRE-WRITING SKILLS)

These activities utilize the recessed number outline to develop fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and the muscular memory required for correct numeral formation.

1. Sensory Tracing and Writing

Objective: Learn the shape and directional strokes for writing numbers (0-9).

Activity:

1. Preparation: Fill the recessed area of the number tile with a fine, granular material such as sand, salt, or colored rice,...
2. Tracing: Select a number tile (e.g., the '1' tray). Guide the child to use their index and middle fingers together, tucking the other fingers away, to trace the number shape through the sand.
3. Practice: Once the child has traced the physical groove, invite them to "write" the number by drawing it freehand in the smooth, surrounding sand area.
4. Repetition: After each attempt, shake the tray gently to erase the number, allowing for unlimited practice and repetition.

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2. Filling and Texturing

Objective: Reinforce number shape recognition through tactile and multi-sensory engagement.

Activity:

1. Play Dough Sculpting: Use the tray as a template by pressing play dough into the recessed number shape,.... Once the dough is removed, the child is left with a 3D version of the numeral they can continue to handle and explore.
2. Loose Parts Lining: Encourage the child to line the number groove entirely with small, loose parts such as lentils, chickpeas, or miniature pom-poms. This requires precision, focus, and develops fine motor control.



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II. NUMERACY DEVELOPMENT (COUNTING AND QUANTITY)

These activities focus on the dual counting area of the tray, linking the abstract numeral symbol to a physical quantity.

3. Number-Quantity Association (The Counting Tray)

Objective: Understand that the number symbol represents a specific, increasing quantity (1, 2, 3, etc.).

Activity:

1. Sequential Counting: Line up the number trays from 1 to 5.
2. Quantity Matching: Ask the child to place the correct number of small, loose items (e.g., small wooden beads, colored stones, or Grapat Mandala pieces) into the recessed counting area of each tile,.... For example, one item goes into the '1' tray, two items go into the '2' tray, and so on.
3. Verbal Reinforcement: As the child places the items, encourage them to count aloud and state the total: "One, two, three. This is the number three tray."



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4. Fine Motor Transfer Challenge

Objective: Integrate counting practice with the use of Fine motor tools.

Activity:

1. Tool Integration: Instead of using fingers, provide the child with small tweezers, tongs, or a scoop.
2. Transfer: The child must use the tool to carefully transfer the correct number of counting items from a central bowl into the counting recess of each number tray (0-9). This activity increases the level of concentration and precision needed for successful completion, significantly improving fine motor skills.



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III. ADVANCED SKILLS (SEQUENCE AND MEMORY)

These activities build on established skills by challenging the child's sequencing ability and memory.

5. Muddled Sequence Correction

Objective: Identify the correct order of numbers (1-10) and reinforce number judgment.

Activity:

1. Scramble: Place the number trays (1-10) on a mat out of order.
2. Sorting Challenge: Ask the child to place all the number trays back into their correct ascending order, creating a straight line or a grid (similar to the way Montessori number rods are sequenced),.
3. Self-Correction: After sorting, the child can place the correct quantity of items in the counting recess of each tray to verify that the sequence of quantities also increases correctly.



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6. Retrieval and Memory Game

Objective: Strengthen auditory memory and quick number recognition.

Activity:

1. Distance Work: Place the 0-9 trays on a mat across the room or across a table. The adult and child sit away from the trays.
2. Verbal Request: The adult calls out a specific number (e.g., "Please bring me the number five rod").
3. Retrieval: The child must mentally recall the visual shape of the number and retrieve the correct tray. This exercise reinforces the sequence and the visual form of the number while practicing retention over a short distance.

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Please bring me the number five rod !

Please bring me the number three rod !

