

## Mathematical moment: Number composition with 4 & 5 year olds

### Composition in a game



In the loose parts area Helen has provided eggboxes for 4, 6, 10 and 12 eggs, as well as ice-cube trays in 10s and cut into 5s as 'frames'.

Today she models choosing a frame (a 6- egg box) and they talk about 'How many they can see'; "*three and three*" "*two, two, two*", etc. to make the total of six. She encourages the children to subitise.

Helen rolls a numeral dice to fill the egg box, choosing buttons, describing what she is doing as: "*I have rolled 3, so that's 1,2,3, buttons and 3 spaces left. 6 altogether. I wonder what I might roll next?*"

She watches the children for a while whilst they explore filling their chosen trays by rolling dice. She takes some photographs of the trays to discuss the composition of different numbers all together, later.

She decides to talk about each total separately and support children in subitising and combining two small quantities to make the total; for e.g. "4 here and 2 empty spaces, I need another 2 to make 6".

