

# Counting Critters

## MATERIALS

**FOR STUDENT:**  
(one per student unless otherwise noted)

- FloraCraft® Make It: Fun® Foam Ball, 2 1/2" diameter
- Two 20mm diameter wiggle eyes
- 8 1/2" x 11" yellow cardstock or heavyweight paper (one sheet per four students)
- Four 4" length chenille stems, red, blue, green and orange (will get three legs per 12" stem)
- Three colored brads (paper fasteners), different colors to match legs
- Paper plate
- Small zip-loc bag (to hold parts)



## FOR TEACHER:

- FloraCraft® Make It: Fun® Foam Tools – plastic knife
- FloraCraft® Design It:® Wire Cutter
- Copy paper (for pattern)
- Hot melt glue gun (for teacher only) or thick white tacky glue
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Fine line permanent black marker
- Ruler

## TEACHER PREPARATION

*Note: Read through all instructions first. The intention is for all of the bugs' body parts to be removable, for play, with the exception of the eyes. Eyes should be glued onto ball in advance, and will help students locate fronts of bugs. Recommend that you completely make one critter first, take it apart and reassemble, before preparing all the others, since knowing how the parts fit, might affect how you prepare the rest of them. Also, suggest that you show your finished project sample only when you want to explain something, or students tend to work ahead by seeing and copying.*

[1] Hot glue (or use thick white tacky glue and dry overnight) to glue two eyes, side-by-side, on each foam ball. Let dry.

[2] For wing slits, use plastic knife to make two slits in top of each foam ball, 1 1/4" wide (right to left), 1 1/4" back from eyes and 1" apart from each other. (Press down into ball 1").

[3] On copy paper, sketch a tapered wing about 2 1/2" wide x 3 1/2" long. For extra sturdiness, draw a 1" square to the tapered bottom, for inserting wing into foam ball.

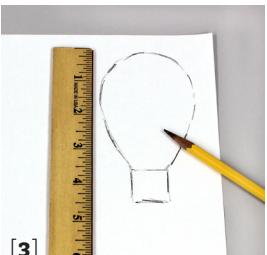
Vertically fold wing-with-square in half, and cut out to make symmetrical sides. Fit into slits in ball and

adjust pattern as needed. Trace pattern for number of wings needed and cut out.

[4] Use wire cutter to cut chenille stems into three 4" lengths per student (different colors).

Optional: Fold under about 1/4" on each chenille stem end and tightly pinch to prevent wire from scratching students.

[5] Use permanent marker to write students' names on plastic bags and put into each bag: Foam ball with eyes, 2 paper wings, 3 brads and 4 legs. Just before students arrive, set bag on paper plate at each student's place.



**MATH**  
GRADE LEVEL **EARLY CHILDHOOD – PRE K**

**COMPLETION TIME**  
• 20 minutes



**OBJECTIVES**  
Students learn:

- Counting 1 - 4
- Listening and following step by step instructions
- Use of fine motor skills and afterwards, play

## STANDARDS

- Count dots, shapes and objects
- Compare more/less
- Position inside/outside, top/bottom
- Classify by color and sort by shape

## LESSON INTRODUCTION

- Explain that there are lots of different kinds of bugs and they have different numbers of body parts. We're going to make a bug that has 1 body, 2 wings, (also 2 eyes) 3 spots and 4 legs.
- Explain that they should follow along, one step at a time and that each student will be making a bug, but all doing it together.



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# INSTRUCTIONS

**[1]** Ask students to keep all parts in their bags, reminding them that you'll all be making this at the same time and that you'll let them know when to take out each part.

**[2]** Ask them to remove the white foam, asking what shape it is (ball) and how many are there (one). Continue asking and answering as follows:

What is glued onto the foam ball? (eyes) How many are there? (two)

When you look in your bag, do you see two of something? (yellow paper) What are they? (wings)

Ask them to remove wings from bag and find where to insert them into the foam ball.



**[3]** Ask them: When you look in your bag, do you see three of something? (brads or paper fasteners, whichever you prefer to call them)

What colors are they? (red, green, blue)

Instruct students to take one (specify color) out of the bag and put into the top of the bug, between the eyes and wings. Then continue with each of the other two colors, one at a time.



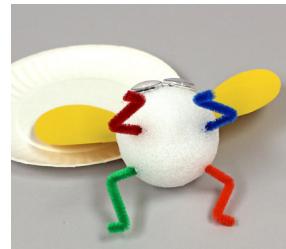
**[4]** Ask students: What is left in the bag? (chenille stems) What do you think they are on our bugs? (legs). How many are there? (four) Instruct students to take one (specify color) out of the bag, leaving the rest inside the bag.

Demonstrate and have students pinch and fold chenille stem in half for the knee. Then demonstrate and have them pinch just one end and bend out for the foot.



Repeat with other legs. (If necessary continue to go through it step-by-step for each leg, or see if students can repeat the process on their own.)

**[5]** Show students how the bug's legs are in the bottom of your foam ball. Have students insert their bugs' legs into bottoms of foam balls.



**[6]** Depending on time, students can play with bugs, removing parts and reassembling, but remind them that the eyes do not come off and parts must be kept on their plates. When finished, have them put parts into bags and seal them. Collect plates.

## MODIFICATIONS

### To simplify project:

- Have legs bent and ready to insert.
- Make starter holes for legs using just the point of a pencil so students can see.
- Work in small groups and assemble one bug among several students.

### To expand project:

- Have each student cut out photocopied pattern of wing, trace twice on chosen color of cardstock and cut out.
- Make other bugs that have more wings (butterfly) or more legs (spider), still keeping track of the counting numbers and body parts.
- Show students how to curl wings by rolling with gentle pressure against edge of table.

### For multiple ages:

- Younger and older students work side-by-side with older students being encouraged to making more complex insects, based on Internet research.
- Have older students design other bugs or animals for younger students to make, or to make for themselves without having to rely on just one number per body part.

## ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- Use for a science unit on insects.
- To display, hang bugs from butcher's twine or cord and have them buzzing around the room.
- Design other animals with different body parts made from foam ball, pom poms, chenille stems, etc.



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## TIPS

- Supervise students so that no parts go into mouths.
- Have extras of all parts, especially wings, brads and feet.
- If concerned about wings tearing as students play with them, back the bottom part of the wings with two layers.
- If students have difficulty knowing where to insert legs, insert just the point of a pencil into the correct location.
- When it's time to put away, have students count with you each part as they put them into their bags.
- If foam balls become worn from play, remove the eyes and glue them onto new foam balls. Also make new wing slits and they will be ready for more play.

## REFERENCES

- 123 by Alison Jay  
*Ten Little Caterpillars* by Bill Martin, Jr.  
*123 Zoo* by Eric Carle  
*Bugs* by Penelope Arlon