



## Finger Activities Grades K-2

### Introduction

Research tells us that it is very important for students to develop ‘finger discrimination’ that is, for students to know their fingers really well. In this Atlantic article I share the importance of using fingers for the brain’s development of numbers, see <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/04/why-kids-should-use-their-fingers-in-math-class/478053/>. Evidence from both behavioral and neuroscience studies shows that when people receive training on ways to perceive and represent their own fingers, they develop better representations of their fingers, which leads to higher mathematics achievement.

### Agenda

Activity	Time	Description/Prompt	Materials
Mindset Video	5 min	Play the mindset video.	Mindset Video
Finger Maze Activities	15 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students place colored dot stickers on each finger nail</li> <li>Explore the Finger Maze</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colored dot stickers (red, blue, green, purple, yellow)</li> <li>Finger mazes copied in color, pages 6, 7, 8</li> </ul>
Finger Twister	10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students work in pairs with one Finger Twister game board between them</li> <li>Teacher calls out player directions. For example,: “Player A put your right index finger on the blue square.” “Player B put your left middle finger on the purple triangle.” Continue play until players can no longer place their fingers on a colored shape.</li> </ul>	Color copy of Finger Twister, 1 for every pair of students, page 9
Debrief Mindset Messages	5 min	Debrief the mindset messages for this activity.	

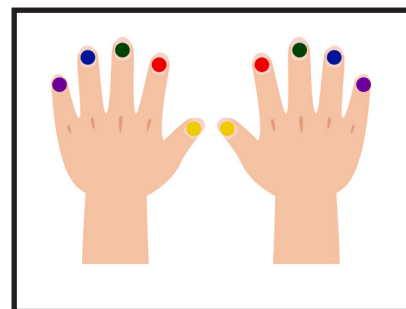


## Finger Maze

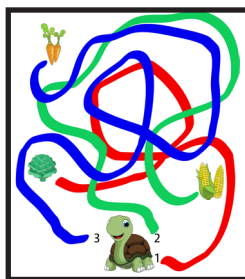
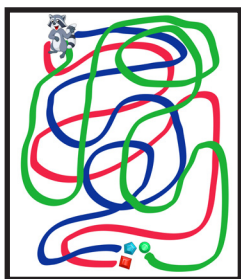
### Activity

Finger Maze activities help children build finger differentiation.

Have students put a colored dot sticker on each fingernail that matches the diagram. This might take some time to do. Show a diagram of the hands - projected or on poster paper in the front of the room and also have colored handouts in the middle of tables. Have students help each other as they are placing dot stickers on their fingernails. If students do not place the colored dots on the same fingers as each other they will experience the maze differently. If you plan to do both finger activities you might want to write numbers on the dot stickers before having students put them on their fingers, then they only have to put stickers on once to do both activities.



Start with the first maze. Have the child match their red index finger to the red path in the maze and slowly trace the path to the end. Each path should be traced slowly and take several seconds. Next trace the green path with the matching finger. After a child uses their dominant hand to solve all of the paths in the maze ask them to use their other hand.



Finger Mazes, pages 4, 5, 6



This activity can be completed in pairs or individually. Make sure every child gets a chance to trace the finger mazes. When students have all had enough time to play bring them together as a class and ask them which maze they thought was the most challenging and why.

Adapted from Gracia-Bafalluy, M., & Noël, M. P. (2008). Does finger training increase young children's numerical performance? *Cortex*, 44(4), 368-375.

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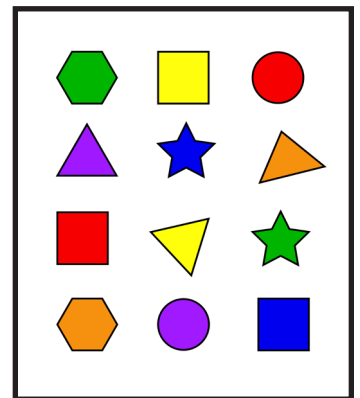


## Finger Twister

### Activity

This activity is based on the popular game “Twister” when children have to place their arms and legs on different colored dots, which leads them to be twisted up in each other! This activity uses fingers instead of whole bodies.

Students can work in pairs with one Finger Twister game board between them. Identify one student as A and the other as B. Ask student A to put their right pointer finger on a colored shape. For example, put your right index finger on the blue square. Ask student B to put their left middle finger on the purple triangle. Ask student A to put their right pinkie finger on the green star, etc. You can say hands off when you think they have enough fingers on the shapes. You can start the activity over at any time.



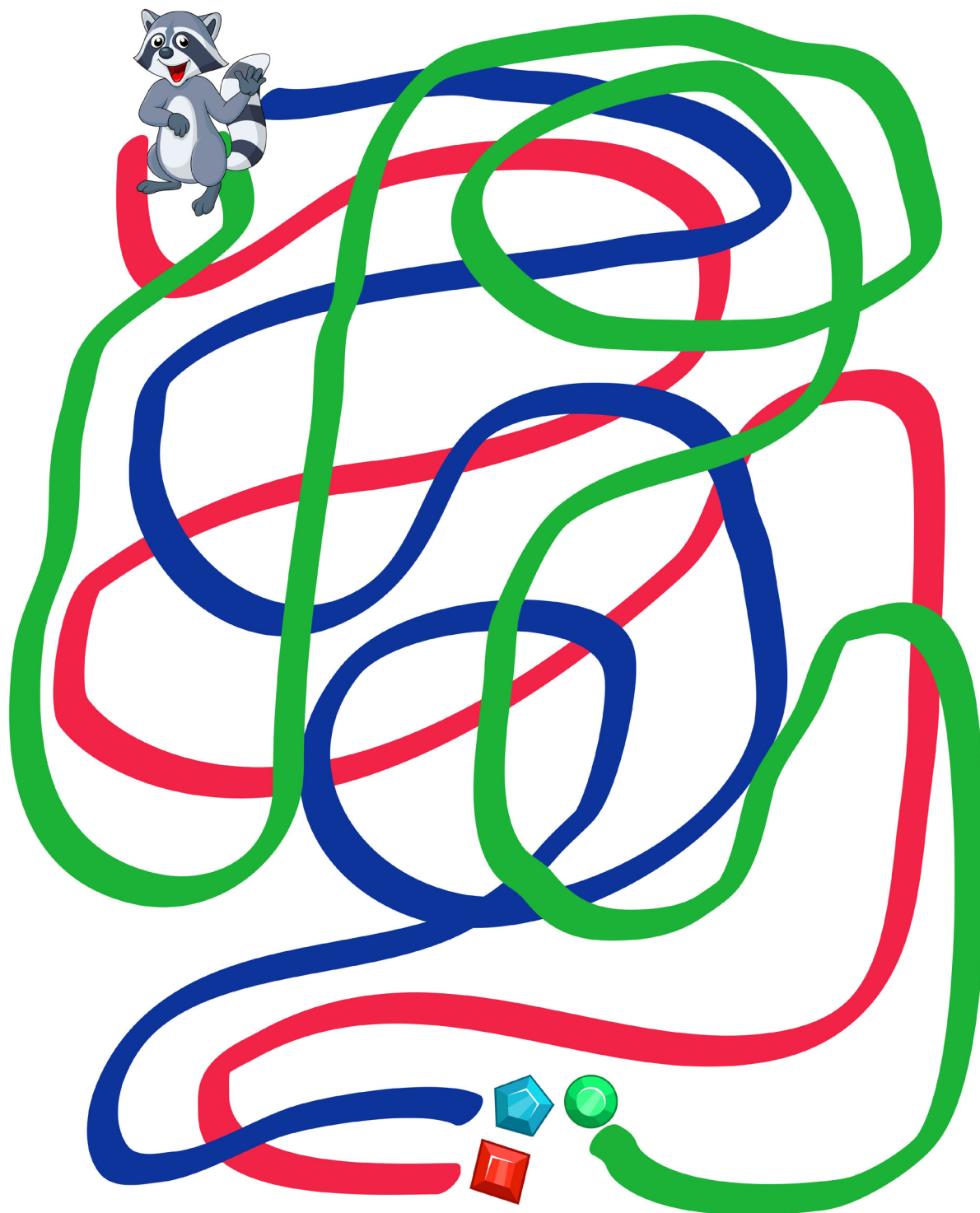
Finger Twister, page 7

### Extensions

- Use different dot patterns for number talks. There are many examples available in the references listed on page 2.
- Make finger twister game boards using colored numbers or other shapes and pictures.
- Add finger discrimination practice to other activities.

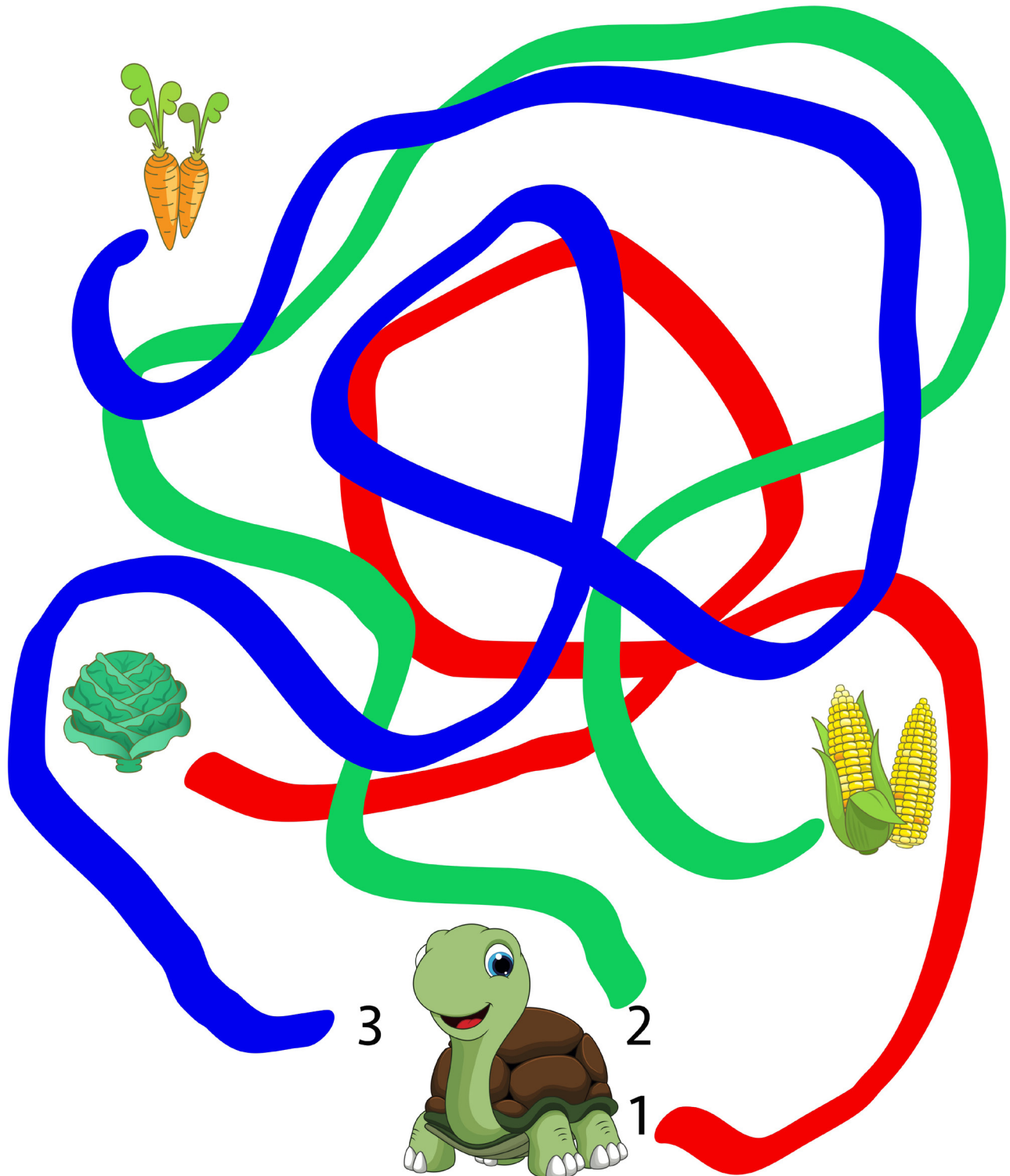


**Help Jackdaw find his favorite gems!**





**Lead Leonard to his favorite food!**





**Help Chezi find the cheese!**







## Finger Twister

