

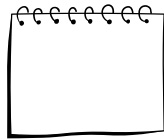
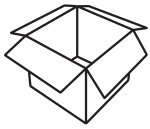
Song notes

Nothing has a name (a song about zero)



What mathematics learning is in this song?

- Understanding meanings and representations of zero
- Exploring different words connected to the idea of zero
- Using the concept of zero in everyday contexts
- Recognising zero as representing “none” or “not any”



Key mathematical language

- Zero: the number we use when there are none of something
- Nought: another name for zero
- Nothing: when there is not anything there to count or measure
- Empty: when something has nothing at all inside or on it
- None: not any at all
- Blank: when something has nothing at all on it

Useful questions to ask

- What does zero mean?
- When could we use the word “zero”?
- Why might we use different words for zero or none?

Follow-up hands-on activities

Activity	Notes
We're Going on a Zero Hunt	Can you go on a zero hunt and find examples of zero or nothing? For example: ● a blank page ● an empty box ● an empty cup or container ● a shelf with nothing on it ● the written digit 0 Encourage children to explain: ● Why does this show zero? ● Is it really empty? ● What could go there?
Counting Zero	Include examples of zero during counting activities so children experience zero as part of counting, rather than separate from it. For example, when counting toy animals: ● "Can you count the cows?" (3) ● "Can you count the sheep?" (4) ● "Can you count the chickens?" (2) ● "Can you count the lions?" (0) Follow up with prompts such as: ● How do you know there are zero? ● What would we need to add to make it one? ● What does zero look like on our fingers?

This song was developed as part of the Tappy Math(s) project, a research-informed collaboration to co-design songs to support the teaching and learning of early mathematical concepts for children aged 3–6. The project draws on current research in early mathematics education and was supported through funding from CRETEd, a project of the Center for Research Use in Education (CRUE) at the University of Delaware (USA). For further information on the research that informed this song you can read:

[Cohrssen, C., Fielding, J. & Bird, J. Informal Assessment of Preschool Children's Concepts of Zero. Early Childhood Educ J 53, 891–902 \(2025\). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-024-01634-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-024-01634-8)

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