Taking Attendance
Goal: Track attendance over time, and look for trends in the data

How many are here today?
Children count how many in the group and compare results.

Talk About...
Did we all get the same number? Did you remember to count yourself? Can you think of someone who usually comes and isn’t here today?

Record the number of children present and if relevant, the number absent.
Review the data weekly

Ask questions involving...

**Easy.** ... most and least: Which day had the highest attendance?  

*Talk About...*  

> Which day had the lowest? Why might that be?

**Medium.** ... what’s typical:

*Talk About...*  

> Does everyone usually show up? What’s typical attendance for a Friday?

**Hard.** ... comparing attendance on different days:

*Talk About...*  

> Can you find a day where we had half as many as usual?

**Variations**

**Count how many together (easier).** Take attendance by asking children to get in a circle and count off. The first person says 1, the second 2, and so on.

**How many fingers? (harder).** Children figure out how many fingers (or fingers and toes together) are in the room. First, they estimate whether the number is about 50, 100, 500, or 1,000. They explain how they came up with the estimate. Then, then find the exact answer, counting by 10’s or 20’s.
Math Spotlight

Comparing amounts with subtraction and fractions

There are 22 signed up, and only 19 are here today.

Older children know that since $22 - 19 = 3$, three are absent. Young children might count or add to find how many are absent.

19 are here, there are 22 in all, so 20, 21, 22... there are 3 missing.

Comparing with fractions means finding what part of the whole is present.

19 out of 22 are here today. $19/22$ is more than $1/2$, since that would be $11/22$.

Everyday Connections

Keeping attendance records

Many afterschool and library programs gather attendance data. They need to know which programs are popular.

Businesses also track attendance. Sandwich shop owners need to know how many people come on different days of the week so they can plan how much food to have on hand.
Grades
  K-6+
Minimum number of participants
  4
Suggested grouping
  whole group
Time
  10 minutes or less (over a week or longer)
Math
  analyzing data; counting and comparing
Materials
  paper and pencils (optional)

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