Fractions (half – 1/2)

Your child will be dealing with fractions over the next few days. This will be done by means of games and using concrete materials.

Game: Cut the apple

Explain to your child that you are going to give him/her a piece of an apple/orange/circular piece of paper/cupcake/pizza, etc. Cut the apple/cupcake, etc. so that one piece is much bigger than the other. Ask your child to choose which piece s/he would like. More than likely, s/he will want the larger piece and would feel it unfair to get the smaller piece. (This exercise may have been done already in class.)

Tell your child that you have a solution to the problem. Take out another apple/cupcake. Explain that s/he will cut the apple/cupcake, etc. but that you will choose which piece s/he will get. This will encourage the 'cutter' (your child) to make the pieces as equal as possible. You can do this activity using other items that your child likes. Try to use healthy foods where possible! Encourage your child to use the language 'half' at this stage – s/he may already have this language.

Making half

Give your child a regular paper napkin. Ask him/her to fold it in two equal pieces (half/½). Ask him/her to explore more than one way of making half, e.g. corner to corner or down the centre, etc.
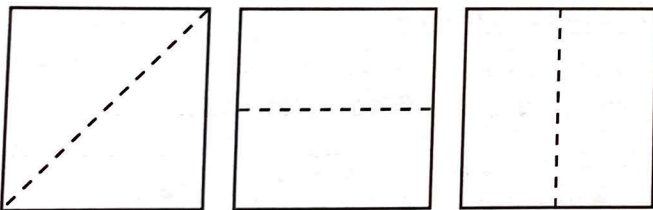
Ask your child to fill a glass with water/sand/peas or pasta shells so that it is (roughly) half-full. Ask him/her to explain why s/he thinks that it is half-full. Then ask your child to build objects out of play dough – regular shapes would be best at this time. Encourage him/her to cut each shape in half.

Sharing equally 1

You will need concrete items for sharing, e.g. lollipop sticks/marbles/cubes/counters, fruit, etc. Explain that you have 10 marbles in your hand and you want to give half to your child and to keep the other half yourself. Share the marbles between you 'one for you and one for me' until all the marbles are gone. Ask your child questions such as:

- *How many did you get?*
- *How many did I get?*
- *Did we get the same amount?*
- *Did I share the marbles equally?*
- *How many marbles are there altogether?*
- *So, what is half of 10?*

Continue with many other examples using different objects up to a total of 20.

Sharing equally 2

Place up to 20 cubes/coins/buttons, etc. on the table. Put two plates/saucers/cups, etc. in the centre of the table. Tell your children that s/he can find half of a number by sharing the cubes equally, e.g. Find half of 14. Have your child count out the 14 cubes. Then have him/her share the 14 cubes equally between the two plates/saucers/cups, etc. Ask the following type of questions:

- *How many cubes are on the left/first plate?*
- *How many cubes are on the right/second plate?*
- *Did you share the cubes equally?*
- *So, what is half of 14? (yes, 7 is half of 14)*

Continue with many other examples using different objects up to a total of 20.

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