

Jumping Frogs

This game can be played with a checkerboard, a couple egg cartons and some rocks, or using the game pictured here:

The object of this game, called Frog Hoppers is to clear the 9x9 “pond” of all frogs except the red one. Frogs can jump over one another along the painted grid and diagonal lines so long as they only jump one frog and have somewhere to land. Jumped frogs go back in the tray beneath, where there are little posts where each frog sits.



Image courtesy Fat Brain Toys ®
<https://www.fatbraintoy.com/>

I introduced this challenge to Jesse (age four), but we ended up playing a much different game. The first time we played, Jesse did incorporate frog-jumps to move frogs from the pond to the shade, but this wasn't what held his interest.

Whenever a frog landed in the tray, or in the shade, as we called it, I made them talk to one another about whether there would be enough room if the other frogs all decided to join them.

The next time we played, Jesse just wanted me to make the frogs talk and continue the debate. Each time a new frog landed in the shade, the frogs discussed whether there would be room for everybody if the others came down, too. Jesse then counted frogs left in the “pond” and the number of spaces left in the shade, confirming a match (and demonstrating a clear understanding of **one-to-one correspondence**).

Interestingly, though, he did this after every new frog moved – I'm not sure if he was just playing along with the little drama or if he didn't realize that changing the situation in this way might change whether there was enough room; i.e. if the constancy of available space (a form of **compensation**) was a new idea.

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