

LET'S TALK ABOUT MATH



EVERYDAY FUN WITH MEASUREMENT

Did you know that your child begins developing early math skills starting at birth—simply through the daily routines and activities you share together? Understanding measurement concepts—such as size, length, weight, height, and capacity—is one of these skills.

From birth to five, children develop measurement skills as they explore:

- The size, length, height, and weight of people or objects—like when they describe a baby sibling as “short” and themselves as “tall”
- The concept of capacity—as they “fill” and “empty” a container with sand or water
- The idea of distance—whether a favorite toy is “far away” or “close by”
- The idea of time—concepts like before, after, later, soon and “in a minute.”

Young children learn about measurement through their explorations and their interactions with you.

PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT MEASUREMENT LEARNING

0-12 MONTHS

When you play with your baby, place toys at different distances from her—some nearby and others a bit farther, but still within reach. Babies learn about distance when they need to adjust their own movements to obtain something they’re interested in. Describe their actions: “You are reaching so far to get the ball!” Or, “That one is very near—can you get it?”

12-24 MONTHS

Use basic measurement language in everyday routines with your child. Point out the “big” truck and the “little” car as you wait at the bus stop. In the bath, let your child play fill-and-dump. Point out when the cup is “full” and when it is “empty.”

24-36 MONTHS

Put measurement skills to work during the daily routines and activities you and your toddler share. At bedtime, measure the bed with your toddler’s help: “It is 1 Kayla wide and 2 Kayla’s long!” Let your child use her senses to explore measurement concepts by lifting the “heavy” apple and the “light” pepper at the supermarket. As you cook dinner, show your toddler the “long” carrot and, after you chop it, the “short” one!

Use measurement language to compare objects that your child sees and uses everyday: Which is bigger, faster, longer, shorter?

3-5 YEARS

Make measurement fun by measuring with objects your preschooler finds in the world around him. When you are at the park, use a stick or a big leaf to measure how long or tall the slide is. At bath time, use a washcloth to measure the tub.

Play comparison games by gathering a few objects and talking about which is longest or shortest. Use comparison words like wide, wider, and widest.

Over time, introduce standard forms of measurement, like rulers or measuring cups. As you cook, point out and read the lines on measuring cups and spoons: “One cup of cornmeal for the cornbread.” Let your child help with filling, pouring, and reading the measurement.

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