

A Parent's Guide to Measurement (Part 1 of 3)

There are many interesting ways in which you can introduce your child to this important skill. **Penny Tassoni explains.**



Introduction:

Understanding measurement and **being able to measure accurately is an important mathematical skill.** It is also a practical one, as we use measurement in many aspects of our lives. If you drive, for example, you should be watching the speedometer - the device that measures speed, or when listening to the weather forecast you may listen out for the prediction of temperature in Celsius - a way of measuring heat.

Five things you need to know about measuring

1. Children tend to be natural measurers

It would seem that many children are primed to be able to compare

quantities. A good example of this is the way that by three years old, most children notice if another child has a larger slice of cake than theirs or when their cup is nearly empty.

2. Children learn best through practical experiences

To learn about an object, children need to consider various measurements. These include weight, height, volume and length, as well as overall size. **Learning for children is always easier if it is done through practical experiences,** as this way they can understand the concepts (height, weight) and the language (heavy, deep, wide) of measurement much more easily.



Esti and Menachem use all sorts of utensils to measure size and weight.

3. Time is hard for children to understand

Time, of course, can also be measured, but it is not something that is given much attention in children's early learning. This is because it is much harder for children to explore, and understand - you can't touch or see the passing of a minute or an hour in the same way that you can touch two objects and feel which is the heavier.

4. Children learn by using 'non-standard units' first

While eventually children will learn about 'standard units' such as centimetres, grams and litres, children begin to learn about measurement by using more familiar 'non-standard units' - such as the length of their hand -

to help them to make comparisons, For example, is the book longer or shorter than their hand?

5. The next step is to link counting and measuring

Once children are starting to use the language of counting ('there are three cups on the table'), and can make comparisons using measure ('this bucket is much heavier'), the next step is for them to learn to quantify these differences. **This is where their knowledge of counting and number come in.** So, children may count how many cups of water it takes to fill up a large bucket as opposed to a small one.



Perry measures the weight of her bowl as she adds rice to it.

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