

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

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



FIVE TIPS FOR LEARNING ABOUT MEASUREMENT

1. Shoes

Putting on shoes is a great way of helping your child to compare sizes. See if your child can make the link between the length of their feet and the size of their shoe. You could also talk about who has the biggest shoes in the family and who has the smallest shoes.

2. Cups and jugs

Pouring a drink is a good skill for your child to master, but it is also a way for them to experience measuring. Using a small jug, point out the difference in water level before and after they have poured water into their cup. You could also ask your child to pour you half a cup or glass of water.

3. Cooking

Children can learn a wide range of skills and concepts from being involved in preparing food. **For a simple start, see if your child can pass things based on length and weight** - for example, a couple of the heaviest potatoes or three of the shortest carrots. You could also show your child a set of measuring spoons, or spoons of different sizes, or show how scales are used to measure ingredients precisely.

4. On a walk

Every time you leave your home, there are endless opportunities for measurement. You could, for example, see who can spot the smallest car in the road, the largest building, or the tallest person. You could also guess how many strides it will take to reach a certain point or have a 'slow race' in which the person who walks the slowest wins!

5. Shower and bath time

Children are usually fascinated by playing with water. Having containers for your child to fill up and empty is a great way for them to learn about volume and capacity. Once your child has finished just enjoying this process, ask a few questions, such as 'Which one holds the most?' or 'How many spongefuls of water do you need to fill up the cup?'



ACTIVITIES

The following suggestions for simple activities can help to develop your child's awareness of measurement.

Wrapping presents

The simple act of wrapping a present is full of mathematical opportunities as well as practical skills. You could begin by encouraging your child to look at the present to be wrapped and to compare it to the amount of paper you have available.

You could talk about how the paper will need to be larger than the actual present, for example. If you have several pieces of paper, your child could select the paper of the best size. Your child could also be involved with putting the

sticky tape on the package and see that a longer strip of tape is needed for longer edges than for shorter ones.

If you have decorative ribbon, your child could also estimate how much ribbon will be needed to go around the package. Afterwards, they may want to continue with this; it is worth leaving out some newspaper, ribbon and sticky tape so they can pretend to be wrapping up presents.

Ordering

Any activities that involve putting things in order will be helpful for your child. This is because ordering involves comparing attributes. There are many ways in which your child might be able to order objects.

For example, as part of their play, you might draw their attention to dinosaurs or farm animals that are of different sizes and then put them in order.

If you have a range of spoons in your kitchen, you could put one of each size out for your child to play with. Some everyday objects also come in different sizes, such as cookie cutters, gift boxes and saucepans.

Which hand?

If you want to play a traditional game with your child, you could put two items of different lengths - for example, drinking straws - into each of your hands. Then put your hands out in front of your child, and ask your child to guess which hand is holding the shorter item.

After your child has chosen, open your other hand so that you can now compare the lengths. Afterwards, your child might like to be the one who holds the items and who asks you to choose!