

## Helping your child with – Measuring volume and mass

Children's early experiences with measurement will often be based on their observations of you as parents. Watching mum or dad measure and pour ingredients for a recipe or weigh items at the fruit shop will often become part of play in following days.

### How do children learn to measure volume and mass?

Children initially develop an understanding of measurement through comparing objects. They may hold up two toys and say one is heavier or lighter than the other or look at two glasses and say one has more water in it than the other. Soon after, they begin to compare more than two objects.

Children need to play with a variety of materials and containers for filling, packing and pouring before they can move to using formal units such as kilograms and grams. They need to understand how things can be packed together to fill a container and which materials are better for packing.

### What can you do at home?

- Give your child different sized plastic cups and a large plastic container to play with in the bath. Encourage your child to guess how many of each cup will be needed to fill the container.
- Talk about how many cups or teaspoons of each ingredient are used in a recipe when you are cooking together.
- Encourage your child to pack away their own toys and books. Talk about how things will fit better depending on the way they are stacked or placed.
- Make a sandpit from a large plastic tub so your child can fill various containers with sand. Sieves, colanders, plastic spoons and bottles, old margarine tubs, and funnels are useful equipment for sand play.
- Count how many cups of dry pasta or popcorn are needed to fill a bowl.
- Talk about how much you can hold in your hand. Compare how many marbles or small rocks you can hold to the number your child is able to hold.
- Collect a variety of different sized boxes. Encourage your child to see if they can fit the boxes inside each other. Talk about which box is the best to start with and why.
- Fill a shoe box by stacking with blocks, one layer at a time. Count how many blocks were needed for the first layer and then build more layers.
- "Hefting" is the balancing of an object in each hand and deciding which is the heavier or lighter. This is a good way for children to compare the weight of objects.
- Drop different objects into a bucket of water or the bath to see which makes the biggest splash. Talk about why some things made a bigger splash than others.
- Show your child how you use kitchen scales to measure ingredients.

- Have your child weigh themselves on bathroom scales. Weigh other family members and family pets.
- Talk about how much your child weighed when he or she was born.
- Show where the weight of goods is recorded on food packets.
- Have your child help you weigh items when grocery shopping.
- Play on a see-saw and talk about how to make the see-saw go up, down or balance.



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