

Fun at Home with Preschoolers: Let's Measure!



Your preschool-age child hears you talk about miles, inches, pounds, liters, acres, and minutes. He sees you measuring things. He may wonder how tall he is or how long he can stand on one foot. Here are some home activities that can help your child learn basic measurement concepts.



Use the language of measurement.

- Introduce your child to words such as weight, balance, size, full, yards, area.
- Ask her to compare: “Which board is widest?” “Whose boots are heavier? Yours or Dad’s?”
- Help her ask questions about measurement: “You could ask Grandpa what he measures at work.” “Let’s find out if your lunchbox holds more stuff than mine.”



Show your child how to use measurement in family routines.

- Let your child give pets a set amount of food or water each day.
- He can use teaspoons and measuring cups when you cook together.
- He can learn to check a rain gauge or thermometer and tell you the results.
- She can help fill trash bags and recycle bins. You might help her weigh the trash or recycling each week and use a calendar to keep track of how much your family throws out or recycles.
- He can have a daily schedule for giving garden plants a set amount of water.



Play games together that use measuring skills.

- Join your child in games that involve being aware of distances, such as tag, beanbag toss, and hopscotch. “Pathway” games (for example, Candyland) also involve distances.
- Let her use a timer during games to practice measuring time.



Offer other activities related to measurement.

- Let your child play with nesting toys, interlocking blocks, geoboards, clay, wood scraps, stacking toys, and fabric squares.
- Offer your child measuring tools (rulers, eye droppers, balance scales, timers) for study or play. Provide clear tubes and containers for sand and water play.
- Help your child use nonstandard items (hands, thick string, shoes, floor tiles) to describe the size of things around him. “This table is five tiles long.”
- Invite your child to guess the weight of pets, family members, or toys, checking them on a scale. You might help her make a chart of her results.
- Make a quilt with your child, or let him help you build a model, a birdhouse, or other small construction project.



For related Web resources, see “Fun at Home with Preschoolers: Let’s Measure!” at <http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tips.htm>.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



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