

Information for parents

Learning about measure

Dad, Aoife and Orla are out for a walk in the park. As the children climb a tree Dad uses words like **high** and **low**, **far** and **near**. When they pick up sticks he draws their attention to **differences in length** and **size**. A couple of days later as he reads them their bedtime story 'Spot Bakes a Cake' he explores measure words like **tall** and **long**. Looking at the cover they chat about Spot being up on a **high** stool and wearing a **tall** chef's hat and using a spoon with a **very long** handle in order to stir the cake.

As can be seen from the example above, maths is everywhere around us. This tip sheet focuses on one area of maths: **measure**. During the pre-school and early primary school years it is important that children learn to use a range of measure words especially when comparing the height, length and size of people and objects.

Using the language of measure

The table on the next page gives some ideas of language you might use to help your child talk about measure during play and every day activities. Encourage your child to **compare** the **height**, **length** and **size of people and objects**. Talk about how things are the same and how they are different and introduce measure words like **higher**, **longer**, **lightest**, **tallest** rather than using terms like big and small.

Activity	Language you might use
Playing with toys	<i>What a lovely little teddy! You have the smallest one in the box.</i>
Exploring water	<i>Look, the jug is overflowing.</i>
Drawing a picture	<i>This crayon is thick but the pencil is thin.</i>
Making shapes with play dough	<i>That snake is very long. But this snake is really short.</i>
Building with the blocks	<i>That tower is so tall. Look it's even taller than you!</i>
Tidying the toys away	<i>The cars go in the largest box.</i>
Getting dressed	<i>These socks are the same size.</i>
Getting a drink	<i>Oops, the cup is nearly full!</i>
Carrying the groceries	<i>This bag is very heavy.</i>
Baking bread	<i>I don't have enough flour to make the bread. Look the bag is nearly empty!</i>
Getting ready to buy something	<i>There are lots of coins but only a few notes in my purse.</i>
Getting the rubbish ready for the bin	<i>A longer piece of string would be better to tie the bag.</i>

Saying nursery rhymes and enjoying books about measure

Saying **counting** and **nursery rhymes** is another good way to learn about measure, for example, *Twinkle, twinkle little star*, *Humpty Dumpty* or *One, two buckle my shoe*.

Sharing and talking about **books** also gives children opportunities to hear and use the language of measure. As well as reading the book together, give your child lots of opportunities to talk about the pictures and the story with you. The bookshelf shows some suggestions for books which can help your child learn about measure. There are many others! Ask at your local library or search online for more suggestions.



When talking with your child about the stories:

- use measure words like **tall, high, long, full, empty**.
- compare heights and sizes – **smaller than/taller than/longest**.
- introduce new measure words like **thickest, loudest, fastest**.

Your interest in your child's activities and the fun you have together in talking about them will help your child enjoy and learn about the ideas and words that relate to measure.

Go to www.aistearsiolta.ie for more ideas to help your child learn and develop.