Learning Focus—Comparing Measurement Attributes

This module offers experiences in recognizing the attributes of length, weight (mass), and capacity, and comparing objects by their length, weight, and capacity with a focus on measurement language.

Recognize length and use it to compare objects

The first step to understanding the attribute, or characteristic, of length is understanding and using language such as *tall*, *short*, and *long* to describe the length of an object or the height of a person.

This then extends to comparing lengths and describing them using words with *-er* endings, such as *taller*, *shorter*, and *longer*. This helps develop spatial reasoning skills.

Suggest your child walk around the house to find objects that are longer, shorter, wider, or thinner than their hand or arm.

Recognize weight (mass) and use it to compare objects

Weight describes the pull of gravity on an object, and mass describes the amount of matter in an object. Because mass is a fairly abstract concept for children, weight is used when talking about the lightness or heaviness of objects.

Because understanding weight means knowing the difference between light things and heavy things, children lift objects to determine their weights relative to each other and describe them accordingly.

This is extended to comparing objects by weight and describing them using words with *-er* endings, such as *lighter* and *heavier*.

Create a balance scale by using a clothes hanger, two plastic bags, and two clothespins. Allow your child to determine which side is heavier by placing more objects in one of the bags than in the other.

Recognize capacity and use it to compare objects

Capacity is how much a container can hold. At this stage, children identify whether a container is full or empty, and use that language to describe the container.

This is extended to comparing containers by capacity, describing them with language like *holds more than* and *holds less than*.

Understanding capacity supports the development of logical and spatial reasoning skills.

When eating breakfast, ask questions such as, “Will this whole gallon of milk fit in your cereal bowl?” “When we are washing dishes, will all these dishes fit into the sink?” Encourage children to talk about their understanding of capacity.

Please help by sending the following:

- ☐ Different-sized kitchen utensils such as spoons, spatulas, and whisks
- ☐ One small toy and one big toy
- ☐ Different sizes of the same kind of clothing, e.g. small, medium, and large shirts
- ☐ One light object and one heavy object
- ☐ Different-sized travel bags
- ☐ Child-friendly magazines, catalogs, and mailers