

JUST RIGHT FOR ME

Big Idea Focus: All measurement is comparison, and comparisons must be “fair.” All measurement is approximate.

In this lesson, children:

- Explore the attribute of length
- Make direct comparisons to find classroom objects that are about the same length as their hand
- Practice beginning measuring techniques
- Justify their findings to one another

Materials

- A version of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* tale
- Objects found in the classroom

1. Review *Goldilocks* and Introduce Activity

Remind children of the tale of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Ask children why they think that the Bear family’s things—porridge bowls, chairs, beds—all come in different sizes. Discuss how they know what things belong to Baby Bear. *What size is “just right” for Baby Bear?*

Tell children that today they will get to look around the classroom to find things that are “just right” in size for them.

2. Demonstrate How to Make Direct Comparisons

Ask children to search for things that are about the same length as their own hand. Choose a volunteer to model what they are going to do. For example, say:

- *Let’s look at Della’s hand first. Where does her hand start? Where does her hand end? That is the **length** of her hand [wrist to tip of longest finger].*
- *Do you see anything in the room that might be about **the same length** as Della’s hand?*

Try out several suggestions from the group. Model how to line up the end of the classroom object with the base of the child’s hand. Determine together whether the object is the same length or not. Allow children to decide how precise is “just right” enough to be considered the same length.

Next, give children a few minutes to find and measure objects around the classroom with their hands to see if they can find any they believe are the same length.

Planning Tips

Make sure that children are familiar with the tale of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* prior to this lesson.

Introduce this lesson to **small groups**. Once children gain experience making direct comparisons, you may want to repeat the lesson at whole group time with various other body measurements such as length of arm, foot, or hand span.

Math Language Learning

Model and encourage children to use attribute language that is specific to length: **longer, taller, shorter, same length**.

Observation

Do children try measuring objects that seem unlikely to be the length of their hand? Or, are they discriminating, measuring only those objects that are fairly close? Do they become more discriminating with experience?

3. Discuss Children's Findings

Invite children to share what they found. Because children will find objects of various shapes, you may need to help them isolate the attribute of length. Help them line up the end of the objects with the base of their hands when comparing.

Ask children to justify their findings, for example:

- *How did you decide if it was “just right?”*
- *How can you be sure it's about the same length?*
- *How does it compare to the length of your hand?*
- *Did other children find the same objects as you did when they measured with their hand? Why or why not?*

4. Close the Lesson

Remind children that to find a “just right” object for the length of their hand they need to **compare** it by lining up their hand with the object, end to end. Tell them that this works for other measurements of length, too.

Plan to return to this activity over time to provide additional opportunities for children to work with direct comparisons using other body measurements such as length of arm, foot, or hand span.

Observation

*Can children focus on the attribute of **length**, or are they distracted by other size properties of an object such as width, depth, or weight?*

Differentiation

As children are ready, you can ask them to look around the room for objects that are **longer** or **shorter** than the part of their body they are comparing.

Ask children to share their findings so that they will have the opportunity to use comparative language such as, *The crayon is shorter than my hand.* It is also important for children to express the inverse relationship: *My hand is longer than the crayon.* You may need to model the language for them.