

How to encourage maths in water play

Learning aims

- To allow children to explore water as well as maths on a larger scale
- Develop mathematical development through investigating, experimenting, constructing and problem-solving
- Introduce and use mathematical vocabulary such as; empty/full, many/few, before/after, more/less, same/different, heavy/light, shallow/deep and greater/less than.



Resources

- Water
- A large container
- A collection of different sized containers to fill and empty, including those with sprinklers (recycled bottles and containers are ideal)
- Extend this to include large guttering and water pipes for children to move around, set up and experiment with
- Change of clothes if children get really wet!

Activity Outline

1. Set up a space outdoors for water play on a larger scale, have a container for some of the water but extend the play further by having buckets, containers, guttering and pipes for them to explore and transition the water
2. Give children the time and freedom to explore and play. Observe and scaffold learning where required, helping children to predict, problem solve and support the use of mathematical language
3. Set children challenges to help extend their problem solving and thinking skills. For example, “who can predict how many small buckets fill the large container?” or “how can we get this boat to move from here to here?” Children will delight in the challenge of guessing and testing out their theories!

Extending the activity

- Consider using an outdoor water tap, water barrel or hose to support outdoor water play if you don't already have these
- Top tip - Don't forget the opportunities to splash in and sweep up puddles!

Special considerations

Risk assess and ensure all water activities are supervised at all times.