



BATH TIME!

The next time you fill up the tub, make bath time math time as you explore “empty” and “full” and compare volumes.

Materials:

household containers such as:
 small pots
 plastic bowls
 measuring cups
 deli containers

Directions:

1. Allow your child to play with containers during bath time. Join in, or set the example, by using your own container. Fill your container with water and explain what you’re doing (“Look! My cup is full! No more water can fit in my cup.”). Pour out the water to show empty (“I’m pouring out all the water. Now the cup is empty!”) Invite your child to copy what you do. Encourage your child to use the words “full” and “empty” to describe what is happening.
2. Choose two containers, one smaller than the other, and give the smaller to your child. Wonder aloud whether the containers hold the same amount of water. Does yours hold more than, the same amount as, or less than your child’s? Pour the water from your container into your child’s and talk about what happens. (“Oops! There’s not going to be enough room. My container isn’t empty yet and yours is already full!”).

You can do this several times and then give your child a container larger than yours for you to pour into. Discuss what happens. (“Hmm. My water is all gone but your container isn’t full.”). Take turns pouring and holding the different-size containers.

3. Another bath time, invite your child to be the leader, choose a container, and then tell you to find either a smaller or bigger one to pour into. Repeat the activity as long as your child enjoys it. Talk about what’s happening each time (“Look, I’m filling your container. Uh-ohhh ... your container isn’t full yet and mine is already empty!”).

Parent Pointers:

- This activity helps with volume measurement.
- Adaptation for infants: Allow your child to play with containers as described in step 1. Add additional steps as soon as your child can participate.
- Extension for older children: Include different-shaped containers that present more of a challenge in anticipating volume. With increasing experience, introduce the standard measuring tools such as a cup, a half cup, and a tablespoon for further experimentation.