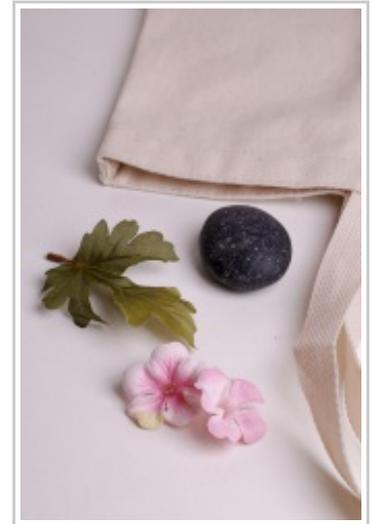


Go on a Nature Hunt!

With the weather warm and toasty, and you and your family heading outdoors, keep in mind that preparing your child for excellence in kindergarten math can be done anywhere, any time. The natural world is a string of math lessons, waiting to happen.

In this simple and social activity, children use size comparison skills to find objects in nature that are bigger, smaller, longer, shorter, taller, wider, and narrower. These concepts are not only important for kindergarten math, they also encourage children to become better scientific observers. So find a space to roam—a sandy beach, a wooded park, or a lakeside shore, all offer ample materials to help your child understand size comparison words.



What You Need:

- Large bag or sack, for example, an old pillowcase or grocery store bag
- Small bag or sack (you can use a paper lunch sack, or get something fancier at a party store)
- Set of template cards (provided)
- Five small objects. For example: a stone, a leaf, a stick, a shell, and a flower blossom.

What You Do:

1. Invite your child on a nature treasure hunt. Give her the challenge bag (the small bag or sack, which should have the five objects inside of it) and let her know that her clues are tucked within. Then gather your collection bag and head out to an open space with plenty of nature to explore.
2. When you arrive at your destination, pull out the set of template cards. Each one is marked with a comparison word: “bigger,” “smaller,” “longer,” “shorter,” “taller,” “wider,” and “narrower.” Shuffle the cards and ask your child to pick one. Read the card aloud. Then ask your child to reach her hand into her challenge bag, and pull out one object.
3. Time to hunt! Your child’s challenge is to find an object similar to the one in her hand, but using the words from the card. For example, if she chose the card “bigger” and pulled out a stone, she must hunt for a stone that is bigger than the one in her hand.
4. As she finds each object, move on to the next challenge in her bag. (And the next card in the pile!) And be sure to talk about it, using mathematical language to discuss size. For example, you might say, “Wow! Your hand is so much narrower than your leaf!” That may prompt her to do a comparison of her own, such as, “My leaf is wider than your hand!” Be sure to put all the found objects into the pillowcase or large bag you have, so you can look at them later.
5. Once the hunt is over, take a look at all the treasures you put in the pillowcase. Lay them out on a table and let your child display her findings to a friend or relative. Telling someone else about the collected objects is a good way to cement the use of those comparison words!

No matter the setting, children learn best when they can make concrete connections about new concepts. Your nature walk together will allow for these important connections to grow, as well as the connection between you and your child (the most important connection of all!)