MathStart®

Activity Ideas

Capacity is an important concept in geometry.

Poor little Birdie! He doesn't have a house to protect him from the wind and rain. So his buddies — Spike, Queenie, Goldie, and Fidget, who range in shape from tall, thin, and narrow to short, fat and wide—decide to help him find one. They fly all over the neighborhood, but each house they come to is either too tall, too wide, too fat or too short for Birdie, but perfect for one of them. Just when the skies begin to cloud over and things look their bleakest, Birdie's friends pitch in to build a house that's just right for Birdie. Illustrated by Edward Miller.

DC Standard 4.3, Measurement: Children will use a variety of nonstandard and standard tools to measure and use appropriate language terms to describe size, length, weight and volume. (4.3.l) Use nonstandard units to measure length and amount of content

- Ask each child to imagine a bird and describe it. For example, a stork is tall, a penguin is short, a sparrow is tiny, and a turkey is big (factoid: Ben Franklin thought the turkey should have been our national bird instead of the bald eagle!). Then ask the children to draw a picture of their bird, and a birdhouse scaled to the bird's shape.

- Take out a one-cup measuring cup and a few large bowls or containers. Ask the children to guess how many cups of water are needed to fill one of the containers. Have one of the children check the estimate by filling up the container, one cup at a time. Taking turns, continue with the other containers. You can also use sand at a sand table or on the playground.

- Have the children imagine their families as birds. Now draw them and their corresponding birdhouses. Ask how big a birdhouse would you need to fit your entire family? Wow!

- Gather together a collection or four or five stuffed animals and boxes of different sizes. Have the children decide which animal taller, which is thinner and which is wider? Which is the tallest? Which animal fits best in which box?

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