



Play School's Big and Small Early Education Notes

BACKGROUND

A child's world is filled with endless delight in all things big and small. Play School's Big and Small focuses on the comparisons between the natural and built environment. This series shares in the awe and fascination that comes from observing the tiniest of creatures though to the most gigantic structures! "Through the Windows" we see children exploring things big and small in their gardens, at home, in the city, on the sea and in the outback.

EARLY EDUCATION CURRICULUM LINKS

This series builds understandings about the mathematical concept of measurement by exploring and comparing things *big and small* ([EYLF Learning Outcome 4.2](#)). Our extension ideas suggest other ways to help children develop measurement skills by exploring the size, length, height and weight of people and objects.

The 'Big Play School Pop-Up Book' reveals new small worlds in each episode.



CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

Play School's Big and Small compares the different sizes of creatures great and small, helping children learn important mathematical language about measurement. Miah meets Petra the Labrador and her five puppies, comparing their size and the length of their tails. Matt creates a baby giraffe using cardboard boxes and cylinders, comparing it to the size of a mother craft giraffe.

Leah and Luke find tiny insects and plants in the Play School Pop-Up Book; a ladybird on a leaf, an incy-wincy spider climbing up a big flower stem, and a snail sleeping on a rock. Rachael and Luke find animals in a pop-up Aussie outback scene and play a guessing game with clues including unique features and sizes of crocodiles, brolgas and kangaroos.



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Construct different sized animals using recycled boxes and loose parts. Encourage children to use vocabulary to describe the size and shape of their creations ([EYLF Learning Outcome 5.1](#)). Explore measurement by asking comparison questions such as *which animal is taller / longer / higher / shorter / lower?*
- Set up a small world play garden scene for imaginative play using a sand tray with model insects and animals of different sizes, fallen leaves & sticks, pinecones, stones and wooden blocks for children to build understandings about the concept of *big and small*.



DINOSAUR BONES

Scrap the dog becomes a palaeontologist and digs for the right sized bones to fit his Diamantinasaurus skeleton. Scrap explores concepts of measurement by making sure he finds bones that are 'big enough' to complete the dinosaur leg in the skeleton. Through encouraging children to compare objects by size, weight and length, we can foster their understandings about measurement ([EYLF Learning Outcome 5.4](#)).



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Arrange sets of everyday objects in size order (shortest to longest); try using cutlery, lego or pencils.
- Research and compare the different sizes and shapes of dinosaurs online and in picture books. Then create dinosaur models using play dough, pop sticks and other loose parts.

BIG CITIES

Matt and Emma use boxes to build a city. They compare buildings in their busy city by using vocabulary to describe size such as big, bigger, small, smaller, tall and taller. This type of construction play provides valuable opportunities to talk about size and shape, as well as foster children's learning about spatial awareness and problem solving ([EYLF Learning Outcome 4.2](#)).



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Build a streetscape of your local community using different sized and shaped boxes, wooden blocks and figurines. Include shops, schools, libraries and other familiar landmarks or buildings.
- Measure everyday objects using non-standard units. For example, use pop sticks to measure how tall children are. *Are they 8 or 10 pop sticks tall?* This kind of informal measurement helps children build understandings about the attribute of height.



STORYTELLING

Leah and Luke tell a story about 'The Great Big Enormous Carrot' where local farmers all help to pull a gigantic carrot out of the ground. A tiny farmer mouse even lends a hand. Michelle and Miah also tell a story about a 'Beach Treasure Hunt' where Jemima and Kiya find a little shell that makes a very big sound.



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Provide props of different shapes and sizes for children to make up and re-tell favourite picture book stories. Storytelling experiences are a great way for children to use mathematical language and communicate their understandings about the concept of big and small.
- Introduce standard units of measurement by tracing around different sized carrots and other vegetables on paper. Then use a ruler to measure and compare their lengths in centimetres.

PICTURE BOOK TITLES FROM THIS SERIES

- Little One (2022), written by Jane Godwin and illustrated by Gabriel Evans.
- The Little Yellow Digger (2011), written by Betty Gilderdale and illustrated by Alan Gilderdale.
- Thank you Rain! (2022), written by Sally Morgan and illustrated by Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr.

HELPFUL LINKS

[Play School Story Time Conceptual PlayWorlds](#)

[ABC Kids listen: Dino Dome podcast series](#)

[ABC Kids Early Education reflective journal: When the dinosaurs came to Kindy!](#)

[The Wonder Gang: The Puppy Dog Question](#)

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