



Socks

Using everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity and volume
Counting reliably



Children often enjoy playing with their clothing and filling all sorts of things with sand and other objects.

Adults could provide a large collection of random socks and leave them in various places in the environment.

The Activity

Leave a variety of socks around the setting, some paired, some odd. Good places to place them might include, for example, in the sand pit/tray or amongst small world play figures such as dinosaurs, people ... This might encourage children to experiment with filling the socks with different materials/objects. Other children might enjoy trying to sort and/or pair the socks.

Encouraging mathematical thinking and reasoning:

Describing

Tell me about these (socks).
What have you done with these (socks)?

Reasoning

What do you think might happen if we put in more sand/more dinosaurs/more ...?
Can we sort them in a different way?

Opening out

What could you put into that sock instead?
What do you think will happen? Why?

Recording

Would you like to remember this by taking a photo?
How can we remember which sock goes where? (when sorting or ordering)

The Mathematical Journey

Shape, space and measure

- Using their own language to describe shapes
- Talking about patterning and design (how a pair match)

Same and different

- Developing the use of language to compare and contrast, for example, a sock filled with dinosaurs compared with a sock filled with sand

Counting

- Counting actions
- Saying one number for each object (e.g. when counting dinosaurs in a sock)
- Estimating the number of objects and checking by counting
- Beginning to use vocabulary involved in adding

Development and Variation

This playful situation could lead to a variety of mathematical conversations, depending on what the children choose to do. Counting may play a part (cupfuls of sand to fill a sock/number of small dinosaurs to fill a sock) but equally, a sock filled with sand can lead to the use of interesting words to describe its shape.



Some children may be keen to pair the socks and/or sort them in various ways and you could set up scenarios to encourage this if that is where their interest lies, perhaps by involving characters from recently-read stories/rhymes or toys in the setting.

The NRICH Early Years activity 'Washing Line' could be linked to this one.

Resources

A collection of socks, including some 'odd' ones.

A sand pit/tray with objects that could be used as scoops.

Small dinosaurs/small world toys etc. that could be used to fill up a sock.

Equipment to record what children say/discover.

Photograph acknowledgements: http://www.ehow.com/how_12119295_make-rabbits-out-socks.html and nicolewood.blogspot.co.uk

