

## Mathematical moment: Measures with size and capacity with 3 & 4 year olds

### Water play



The weather had been warm so we have had lots of water opportunities and a provocation was set up for filling and pouring explorations. Oliver decided that the animals that we also had outside, in a different area, needed a bath to cool down.

He selected the animals and then set out to find a container or 'bath' that was the correct size for each animal. He used his problem solving skills as he chose the most suitable bath. *It too long to go in there. Need bigger.* Once in the bath, Oliver used a variety of different tools to scoop the water. We had a discussion about which would be best for filling the baths *This going to take a really long time [teaspoon]. This one faster [ladle] lots fit in here.* As well as exploring the size of the containers, he began to think about the depth, *This too full - can't breathe [as the elephant was fully submerged].* He then used to spoon to empty some water, commenting, *That just a little water now - not too much.*

This led to lots of wonderful mathematical talk and new vocabulary for Oliver to use, in action, - such as full, half full and empty - where this could also be modelled by an adult, during our play. We also used other new vocabulary, such as deep and shallow. Soon, Oliver was using some of these words, independently in his play and sharing his new knowledge with his friends. Oliver noticed that the T-Rex needed a wash but after using trial and error, realised that nothing was big enough for

the dinosaur. Oliver searched the garden, until he found a pan that was just the right size. He then went to find bowls and buckets to fill the pan as he knew, from his previous findings, that a spoon did not hold enough water.



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