The Child Unplugged

CONTAINERS & FILLING EXPLORATION

Activity Book



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Introduction

Children love exploring how things fit into spaces. These activities introduce the concept of capacity—how much a container can hold—through fun, hands-on learning.
Kids compare, estimate, and observe different containers to see which holds more or less and what happens when they are filled. It's not about exact measurement, but about thinking, guessing, and discovering through play. This builds early skills in math, observation, and problem-solving simply and enjoyably.







Why Containers & filling Activity Is So Valuable

- Builds early understanding of capacity (how much something holds)
- Strengthens estimation skills through guessing and comparing
- Develops basic math thinking (more, less, full, empty)
- Encourages observation and visual reasoning
- Supports early problem-solving skills
- Introduces simple science concepts in a playful way
- Improves focus and attention to detail

Every scribble, line, and swirl is part of the learning process.

How to Support Play at Home

Create a playful space where children explore different containers, guess and compare capacity, and stay curious by asking which holds more and what happens when they are filled.

Basic setup:

- Different containers (cups, jars, buckets, bottles)
- Small fill items (blocks, marbles, beads, or drawn shapes)
- Paper, pencils, or crayons for recording answers

Simple steps:

- Show children two or more containers
- Let them observe and compare sizes
- Ask them to guess which holds more
- Let them circle, draw, or point to answers

Helpful tips:

- Start with very different sizes (big vs small) for beginners
- Use real-life examples to make it relatable







Ideas

Provide different containers (cups, jars, buckets) and small items like blocks, marbles, or beads for children to explore filling, comparing, and estimating capacity.

FILL THE CONTAINER

WHATS NEEDED:

- Illustrated containers (e.g., jar, cup, bucket, bottle)
- Simple fill items (drawn or printed):
  - marbles
  - cubes or blocks
  - coloured lids
- Optional: stickers, crayons, or pencils for responses
- Visual cues like “empty,” “half full,” “full” icons (for support)

WHAT TO DO:

Activity 1: Which Holds More?

- Show 2–3 containers.
- Ask: “Which container will hold more?”
- Child circles the correct answer.

Activity 2: Fill Level Drawing

- Show containers in outline form.
- Ask children to draw or shade: empty, half full, full

Extension Question:
What would you put inside each container?”

BENEFITS:

- Builds early math reasoning (capacity and comparison)
- Develops visual estimation skills
- Strengthens critical thinking (“Which holds more?”)
- Introduces early scientific concepts of volume
- Encourages decision-making and reasoning skills
- Supports fine motor skills through circling or drawing
- Prepares children for later measurement concepts



HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Younger children:** Use simple big vs small containers
- **Older children:** Add closer comparisons and use “more” and “less capacity.”
- **Advanced:** Include trick shapes where size can be misleading
- **Hands-on:** Use real containers for filling and exploring
- **Themed:** Try fun ideas like beach, kitchen, or space settings

HEAVY OR LIGHT FILL

WHATS NEEDED:

- Containers (cups, bottles, jars, bowls, buckets)
- Safe filling materials (water, rice, beans, sand, or blocks)
- Tray or mat to manage spills
- Optional: scoop or spoon for filling
- Optional: cloth for quick clean-up

WHAT TO DO:

- Fill real containers with different amounts of material
- Place them side by side for clear comparison
- Ask: *"Which one looks heavier/full?"*
- Let children point, lift (if safe), or discuss their choice
- Compare results and talk about why fuller containers feel heavier

BENEFITS:

- Builds understanding of capacity (full, half, empty)
- Introduces the early concept of weight (heavy vs light)
- Strengthens observation and comparison skills
- Encourages hands-on learning and exploration
- Develops reasoning and prediction skills
- Supports real-world understanding of volume and mass



HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Younger children:** Use obvious differences (very empty vs very full containers)
- **Older children:** Use similar fill levels to increase thinking challenge
- **Advanced:** Ask children to predict before touching or lifting
- **Hands-on extension:** Let children fill and compare containers themselves
- **Creative version:** Turn it into a story (e.g., "Which treasure chest is too heavy to carry?")

SPILL OR NO SPILL?

WHATS NEEDED:

- Containers (cups, bottles, bowls, jars)
- Water or safe filling materials (beans, rice, blocks)
- A measuring scoop or spoon (optional)
- Tray or mat to manage spills

WHAT TO DO:

- Fill real containers to different levels (low, half, nearly full)
- Show them to the children one by one
- Ask: *"Which container might spill if we add more?"*
- Let children choose and explain their thinking
- Carefully test by adding a little more to check the result
- Talk about what happened and why

BENEFITS:

- Builds understanding of full, nearly full, and overflow
- Strengthens cause-and-effect thinking
- Encourages prediction and reasoning skills
- Develops observation and attention to detail
- Introduces early awareness of safe limits and control
- Makes learning hands-on and memorable



HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Younger children:** Use obvious differences in fill levels (very empty vs very full)
- **Older children:** Use closer fill levels to increase challenge
- **Advanced:** Ask children to predict how much more will cause a spill
- **Hands-on extension:** Let children fill and test containers themselves
- **Creative version:** Turn it into a game (e.g., "Don't let the juice monster spill!")

PREDICT AND CHECK

WHATS NEEDED:

- Pictures of containers (e.g., boxes, jars, baskets)
- Pictures of objects to fit inside (blocks, balls, toys, etc.)
- “Yes / No” response space or cards
- Optional: follow-up reveal images showing the correct result

WHAT TO DO:

- Show a container and a set of items
- Ask children to predict: *“Will all the blocks fit in the box? YES / NO”*
- Let them choose between seeing the answer
- Reveal the follow-up image showing the actual result
- Discuss whether their prediction was correct and why

BENEFITS:

- Builds prediction and reasoning skills
- Strengthens understanding of capacity and space
- Encourages critical thinking and curiosity
- Develops decision-making skills
- Supports learning through trial, error, and reflection
- Makes learning interactive and engaging



HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Younger children:** Use very obvious outcomes (clearly too big or too small)
- **Older children:** Use closer calls where prediction is more challenging
- **Advanced:** Ask children to explain why they chose yes or no
- **Hands-on version:** Let children physically test predictions using real objects
- **Creative version:** Turn it into a story (e.g., “Will the pirate’s treasure fit in the chest?”)

“HOW MANY FIT?” COUNTING ACTIVITY

WHATS NEEDED:

- Pictures of containers (baskets, boxes, cups, jars)
- Small object illustrations (apples, balls, crayons, etc.)
- Number writing space or answer boxes
- Pencils, crayons, or markers
- Optional: counters or stickers for support

WHAT TO DO

- Show a container filled with objects
- Ask children to count how many items are inside
- Let them write the number or choose the correct answer
- Provide matching questions like “Circle the container that holds 5 balls.”
- Discuss answers and reinforce counting together for better understanding

BENEFITS:

- Builds early counting and number recognition
- Develops understanding of capacity and quantity
- Strengthens one-to-one correspondence (one object = one count)
- Improves observation and estimation skills
- Supports early problem-solving and reasoning
- Encourages focus and accuracy in counting



HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Younger children:** Use small numbers (1–5) with clear visuals
- **Older children:** Increase quantities and add simple word problems
- **Advanced:** Include tricky comparisons between containers with similar capacity
- **Hands-on version:** Let children physically place objects into real containers
- **Challenge version:** Ask “Which container holds the most?” before counting

REAL-LIFE SORTING

WHATS NEEDED:

- Pictures of containers (water bottle, suitcase, lunchbox, bathtub)
- Pictures of items to match (water, clothes, food, toys, etc.)
- Worksheet or cut-and-paste materials
- Glue or pencils for matching

WHAT TO DO:

- Show children different real-life containers
- Present items that could go inside each one
- Ask them to match each container to what it can hold
- Let them draw lines or paste matching pairs
- Discuss answers together to reinforce understanding

BENEFITS:

- Builds understanding of real-life capacity use
- Strengthens logical thinking and reasoning
- Develops sorting and matching skills
- Encourages everyday problem-solving
- Expands vocabulary and real-world connections
- Helps children understand how objects are used in daily life



HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Younger children:** Use fewer, very familiar items with clear matches
- **Older children:** Add more items and include trickier choices
- **Advanced:** Include multiple correct answers or “odd one out” challenges
- **Hands-on version:** Use real objects and containers for physical sorting
- **Creative version:** Ask children to suggest their own items for ea**ch container**

FILL THE JAR COLORING PAGE

WHATS NEEDED:

- Worksheet with a transparent jar outline
- Faint shapes inside the jar (stars, candies, beads, etc.)
- Coloring tools (crayons, markers, pencils)
- Optional: color guide (e.g., red/yellow sections)

WHAT TO DO:

- Show the jar with faint shapes inside
- Give instructions like: “Color 10 items inside the jar.”
- Or: “Fill half the jar with red and half with yellow.”
- Let children color and count as they go
- Review together and discuss how the jar is filled

BENEFITS:

- Builds early understanding of quantity and capacity
- Strengthens counting skills
- Introduces basic fraction ideas (half)
- Improves fine motor and coloring control
- Develops focus and attention to detail
- Encourages visual organization and sorting by color



HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Younger children:** Use smaller numbers (1–5) and simple coloring only
- **Older children:** Increase quantities and introduce halves more clearly
- **Advanced:** Add thirds or mixed-color patterns
- **Hands-on version:** Use stickers or cut-outs instead of coloring
- **Creative version:** Let children design what goes inside the jar (stars, sweets, toys)

MATCH THE FILL LEVEL

WHATS NEEDED:

- Worksheets with containers shown at different fill levels
- Labels or words: “empty,” “¼ full,” “½ full,” “full”
- Pencils, crayons, or markers
- Optional: cut-out labels for matching or sticking

WHAT TO DO:

- Show containers with different fill levels
- Let children observe each one carefully
- Ask them to match the correct label or draw a line to it
- Review answers together and talk about why each match is correct
- Extend learning by asking: “What happens if we add more?”

BENEFITS:

- Builds understanding of capacity and volume
- Strengthens visual discrimination skills
- Introduces early fraction concepts (¼, ½)
- Improves matching and logical thinking
- Supports math vocabulary development
- Encourages focus and attention to detail



HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Younger children:** Use only “empty,” “half,” and “full.”
- **Older children:** Add fractions like ¼ and ¾
- **Advanced:** Mix tricky images with very close fill levels
- **Hands-on version:** Use real cups and physically fill them to match levels
- **Cut-and-paste version:** Let children stick labels instead of drawing lines

DRAW YOUR OWN CONTAINER

WHATS NEEDED:

- Paper or worksheet
- Pencils, crayons, or markers
- Example images of containers (optional for inspiration)
- Space for drawing and writing

WHAT TO DO:

- Ask children to design their own container (e.g., magical container, lunchbox, toy box)
- Let them draw it freely on the page
- Encourage them to think about size, shape, and purpose
- Prompt them: *"What would you fill it with?"*
- Let them add or label the items inside their container

BENEFITS:

- Encourages creativity and imagination
- Builds early understanding of the purpose and function of containers
- Strengthens fine motor and drawing skills
- Develops expressive language and storytelling
- Supports independent thinking and decision-making
- Makes learning personal and engaging



HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Younger children:** Focus on simple drawing and naming one or two items
- **Older children:** Add details like labeling items or explaining their design
- **Advanced:** Ask them to describe special features of their container (e.g., "invisible lid," "never spills")
- **Hands-on version:** Use craft materials to build a 3D container
- **Creative extension:** Turn it into a story about how the container is used in daily life or adventure scenarios

BIGGER OR SMALLER CAPACITY

WHATS NEEDED:

- Containers of different sizes (cup, bottle, bowl, bucket)
- Water or safe liquid (optional for testing)
- Tray or mat to prevent spills
- Coloring sheet or paper with container outlines (optional)

WHAT TO DO:

- Show two or three containers of different sizes
- Ask children to compare them visually
- Prompt questions like: *"Which holds more juice?"*
- Let them color the container that holds the least
- Discuss answers to reinforce understanding of size and capacity

BENEFITS:

- Develops understanding of capacity (more, less, least, most)
- Strengthens comparison and reasoning skills
- Encourages visual thinking and observation
- Builds early math vocabulary
- Supports decision-making and critical thinking
- Makes abstract ideas of volume more concrete and fun



HOW TO ADAPT:

- **Younger children:** Use very obvious size differences (tiny vs big)
- **Older children:** Use closer sizes for more challenge
- **Advanced:** Include trick shapes (tall vs wide containers)
- **Hands-on version:** Use real containers and water or blocks to test capacity
- **Creative version:** Turn it into a story (e.g., "Which cup feeds the giant?")

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Calm, creative painting and colour exploration experiences for babies and young children

Using familiar, accessible materials