Full, Empty or Just Right? Exploring Capacity in Reception

Key points

- Capacity is a maths term that describes how much a container can hold.
- Children in Reception learn this by pouring liquids or solids from one container into another.
- Using words like 'full', 'empty', 'half full', 'more' and 'less' helps children describe what they see.
- Comparing different containers helps children understand that a tall thin glass might hold the same amount as a short wide bowl.
- These early hands-on experiences build the foundation for more formal measuring skills in later school years.

Things to try at home

- During bath time or water play, let your child pour water between different sized cups and jugs.
- Use a small scoop to see how many scoops of sand or dried pasta it takes to fill a favourite bowl.
- While cooking together, ask your child to help you fill a jug to the top or leave it half full.
- Play a guessing game to see which of two containers you think holds 'more' before pouring to find out.

Find out more

- Your child's class teacher or the school's EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) lead.
- The GOV.UK website for official guidance on the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.