Activity Ideas
Dinosaur Bones Match and Measure Set

YD1033

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Dinosaur bones are fascinating for budding paleontologists and dinosaur lovers, as well as children who enjoy digging things up! Build on their existing knowledge of dinosaurs, and use the bones to open up opportunities for imaginative talk and play. The different lengths of the bones will also naturally lead into comparing, sorting and measuring, with plenty of opportunities for using early math language and strengthening mathematical concepts. The bones are ideal for using with small groups of children or supporting an individual child, and great for taking the learning outdoors.

Dino dig

The bones are perfect for hiding in a variety of places ready for children to dig up:

- Bury the bones loosely in sand, soil or potting mix, perhaps with a small part showing to draw children's interest. Provide small spades, trowels, forks or other digging implements, and encourage children to carefully uncover the bones – these special old bones need to be treated gently! Offer magnifying glasses for children to examine the bones, and maybe the soil or sand too!
- Alternatively, hide the bones underwater, in a dinosaur swamp under some biodegradable slime, or bury them in mud-colored playdough.
- Create a hard rocky shell around the bones for children to crumble off by mixing equal parts of flour, salt, sand and used coffee grounds, then gradually mixing in small amounts of warm water until the mixture sticks together and forms a soft dough. After encasing the bones in the dough, leave them in a warm place for several days to dry out fully. Once dried, gently open the 'rocks' to uncover the precious bones – to make this easier for children, pour a small amount of water on them and the shells will become crumbly and easy to break off.



- Once the bones have been found, encourage children to wash them carefully using soft brushes and warm soapy water.
- Alternatively, hide the bones in unusual places in the outdoor area for children to find in a scavenger hunt. Give the children a clipboard and pencil, and ask them to search for hidden bones. As they find the bones, encourage them to make tally marks and to count these until all the bones have been found.
- Throughout all these activities, talk about the bones with the children. Which dinosaurs might they belong to? Which part of their bodies might they be from? How old might they be? How might they have been buried?

Prehistoric play



The bones are great for role play and small-world play:

- Set up a paleontologists' role play area in a large sand tray. You might like to tape it off and offer props such as wide-brimmed hats, a tent and boots. Bury some bones completely but leave others partly visible. You could also include other prehistoric remains, such as Yellow Door's Let's Investigate Fossils or Prehistoric Teeth. Provide the necessary tools for children to work with, such as spades, brushes, magnifying glasses, trays, clipboards and a digital camera. Encourage children to record what they find and take photos for display in a Dinosaur Bones Gallery.



- Once they are uncovered, the bones can be displayed in a role-play museum, which the children can design and create themselves. Discuss what would be important to include, such as model dinosaurs, information posters, display signs, labels and information cards. Museum workers could wear name badges or lanyards. Model how to be a visitor to the museum and ask the curators about their exhibits.
- Create a small-world land of the dinosaurs by burying the bones in a shallow sand tray and adding dinosaur figures, rocks, plants, ferns and other natural materials. You might like to include Yellow Door's Dinosaur Wooden Characters and Play Volcano (with playdough lava flowing from the top).
- For a small-world paleontology dig, after burying the bones in sand or compost, add small-world people to dig them up. Provide them with tools, tents and other equipment, as well as rocks and plants for scenery.

Measuring up

The bones are ideal for helping children with the early math concepts of matching, classifying, sorting and measuring, as well as developing mathematical and comparative language:



- As children uncover the bones, take the opportunity to comment on how long they are, and which are longer or the longest. Encourage children to correctly line up one end of the bones so they can see which is longer. Can they put the bones in order of how long they are? Can they match the bones that are the same length?
- Use inch blocks to measure how long the bones are. How many blocks long is this bone? This bone is longer – will we need more blocks to measure it or fewer? I wonder how many we'll need...? Point out that the inch blocks are all the same size, and this makes them good for measuring with.

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- Can the children find something else that is longer, shorter or the same size as any of the bones?
- With older children, you might like to look at how some of the bones are twice as long as others (and others half as long). For example, the two 4 inch bones are the same length as one 8 inch bone.
- Yellow Door's Dinosaur Bones Match and Measure Activity Cards are designed to enhance these activities, encouraging children to match, count, compare, order and measure the bones. The cards are also washable, so they're ideal for using outdoors, in sand or water.

Get talking – useful words

Length, long, longer, longest, short, shorter, shortest, inch, double, half, paleontologist, excavate, spade, shovel, brush, record, examine, museum, curator, exhibit, display

Books about dinosaur bones

Bone, Bones, Dinosaur Bones by Byron Barton

Dig Dig Dinosaur by Anjali Goswami

Whose Dinosaur Bones Are Those? by Chihiro Takeuchi

Original idea by Anna Ranson

Please keep this leaflet for information



⚠ WARNING

Choking hazard – Not suitable for children under 3 years of age due to small parts.

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