

MAKING AND TOSSING BEAN BAGS

Children gain practice in spatial relations, eye-hand coordination, measurement, and estimation as they express themselves creatively.

Playtime is
SCIENCE™

TIME: ABOUT 40 MINUTES — 15 MINUTES TO CREATE THE BAGS, 15 MINUTES TO CREATE THE TARGETS, 10 MINUTES TO TRY THEM OUT

Skills Developed

Classifying
Estimating
Eye-hand coordination
Model-making
Measuring
Motor coordination
(fine and gross)
Sorting
Spatial-relations

Equity Idea

Girls need tossing activities and experiences that will develop their spatial-relations skills, which are especially important for success in science. In general, boys have more opportunities to develop these skills through games and toys.

S/M/T Framework

Children should know that it is possible (and often useful) to estimate quantities without knowing them exactly.

Materials

- Dried beans of different types and sizes that are familiar to a variety of cultures — navy beans, pink beans, kidney beans, lentils, blackeyed peas, garbanzo beans, mung beans, whole peas, split peas — 1 cup (250ml) per child, plus some extra.
- Foil lasagna or roasting pans to hold the beans.
- Various sized measuring scoops.
- An assortment of clean discarded socks, any size, but without holes.
- Sturdy rubber bands.
- Sharp scissors, to cut off the tops of the socks. (You'll want to keep these out of younger children's reach.)
- A variety of nontoxic markers and crayons.
- Large pieces of paper to make the tar gets — oak tag, or any fairly stiff paper about 20"x30".
- Large shapes that children can trace to make the targets: round pot covers, square or rectangular boxes.

Getting Ready

Have all your materials assembled before you begin. Put a generous supply of each type of bean in a separate pan, and the socks and rubber bands in containers. Place the bean bag materials on one table and the target materials on another. Children can work on the floor to make their targets. You may want to prepare a sample target and demonstrate how to use it in the tossing game.

Note: If you do not wish to use food, you can make the "bean bags" with synthetic packaging materials or assorted buttons, available from recycling materials catalogs.

Activity

Making Bean Bags

1. Gather children around the bean bag table. Explore the sizes, shapes, and sounds of the beans. Ask if children have seen any of the beans before. This is a good opportunity to make cultural connections. Some children will be able to name the beans in English and/or other languages.
2. Explain to children that they're each going to make their own bean bag. Ask them

