Small, Medium, Large

We often hear kids say: “My piece is smaller than hers ...” or “I want the big one!” What they are describing is size. What is size? Simply put: Size is how BIG or how small something is relative to something else.

Teaching size helps develop children’s ability to observe, estimate, compare and predict — skills that are important and useful in daily activities. For example, when playing with blocks, your child must decide which size pieces to use when building a zoo to ensure the toy animals fit.

Size is spatial, relatively abstract and meaningless unless you have a basis of comparison. Children are aware that adults are much bigger than they are. By teaching size, we help give children the words they need to describe and label what they observe. Use rich vocabulary when reading with your child to describe what they see in the story — words like teensy, tiny, petite, midsize huge, tall, gigantic and humongous help build your child’s vocabulary as they learn about size.

There are many books that demonstrate size, both fiction and non-fiction. Incorporate the concept of size within themes that are of interest to your children, such as dinosaurs, trucks, animals or toys.

By Rachel Kelly, Early Literacy Assistant

Books About Size

Find these and many other size-related books at your neighborhood library branch.

- **Actual Size** by Steve Jenkins
  Discusses and gives examples of the size and weight of various animals and parts of animals.

- **Big and Small, Room for All** by Jo Ellen Bogart
  This clever concept book explores the size of animate and inanimate objects and their place in the universe. She introduces children to the concept of "we"—that humans are a big part of the world, but a small part of existence.

- **Big Bear, Little Chair** by Lizi Boyd
  In pictures and simple text the book presents unexpected opposites, like a big zebra sweeping with a little broom, or a big lion riding in a tiny wagon.

- **Big Bug** by Henry Cole
  Beginning with a bug, various objects are revealed as being big and small in comparison with other objects on a farm under the big, big sky.

- **Big Bunny** by Rowboat Watkins
  A parent and child share the telling of a story about a giant bunny who eats carrots—and maybe trucks and bridges.
Big Cat, Little Cat by Elisha Cooper
A moving tale about friendship, new beginnings and cats.

Dino Bites by Algy Craig Hall
A cumulative story finds a hungry dinosaur munching and crunching and searching for lunch until his appetite leads him to a buzzing noise, a hop and a wriggle before he encounters a big surprise.

A House for Birdie by Stuart J. Murphy
As Birdie and his friends try to locate a house that is just right for his size, readers learn about the concept of capacity.

How Big Were Dinosaurs? by Lita Judge
Dinosaurs and modern life collide in a picture book that clearly illustrates how big dinosaurs really were.

How Long is a Whale? by Alison Limentani
Learn about sea creatures in this fascinating book of facts, numbers and wildlife.

I Am Just Right by David McPhail
A boy who is too big for his crib, his tricycle, and being picked up by his grandfather is just the right size for his bed, bicycle and Grandpa’s hugs.

I'm Not Little! by Alison Inches
Little Shaggy, a fuzzy little monster, is tired of everyone calling him little until his mother brings his new baby sister home and Little Shaggy suddenly misses being the youngest.

A Pig is Big by Douglas Florian
Rhyming text explains that cows are bigger than pigs, cars are bigger still and the universe is the biggest of all.

Poor Little Guy by Elanna Allen
An octopus gets a big surprise when he chooses to pick on a tiny fish in the ocean.

Small, Medium, Large: A Book About Relative Sizes by Emily Jenkins
Young readers discover the wonderful world of relative sizes—an important stepping stone to learning early math skills and measurement.

You Are (Not) Small by Anna Kang
Two fuzzy creatures can’t agree on who is small and who is big, until a couple of surprise guests show up, settling it once and for all!

You Must be This Tall by Steven Weinberg
The story of two snake friends, Frank and Harold, who do everything together and want to ride the Rattler Roller Coaster. But one of them is not tall enough.

Library Shout Out: 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten
The 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program is designed to help caregivers prepare children for one of life’s big milestones: kindergarten. Studies have shown that families who start reading aloud to their children at birth help strengthen their language skills and build their vocabulary.

How the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Program Works
1. Any child who hasn’t entered kindergarten yet is eligible for the program, including infants.
2. Once your child has heard 25 books, sign him or her up at any Fairfax County Public Library branch and receive a packet of information with reading logs. Packets are available in English and Spanish.
3. Track your reading. Return to any Fairfax County Public Library branch to receive a prize as milestones are achieved.

The goal is for your child to read or be read 1,000 books before entering kindergarten. Reading unique titles or a child’s favorite book multiple times all count toward the 1,000 goal—we know children like repetition. Hearing books at storytimes also counts to the 1,000 book goal. For more information, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library.