

Activity 5 – Solving a problem by testing

Testing objects for floating and sinking.

Adult supervision is essential for water activities

What to do

- Tell a story which presents a problem to be solved: explain that you are looking for some good things to use as bath toys but you want them to float so that you won't have to hunt round for them under the bubbles.
- Explain that you are not sure which things will float and which will sink – we will have to test them.
- Go around the house collecting a selection of likely & less likely items.
- Before testing, talk about each object and sort according to your child's prediction. Which will sink? Which will float?
- Test the predictions, one at a time. If you have a transparent container, you look through the side and easily see which floats and which sank.
- Record your findings by drawing, listing or creating a table.

What you need

Lots of objects to test – you can collect these together (e.g. *wooden, plastic and metal spoons, marble, pencil, cork, rubber, coin, plastic, metal and wooden toys, etc*)
A water filled container – transparent is best for careful observation



Extension

Talk about why your child thinks some objects floated and some sank.
Provide some of the tested objects as toys next bath time.
Make a poster to share your findings.

Questions to ask

What happens when an object floats?
How can we tell if something has sunk?
What materials are bath toys made of?
Do you think this will float? Why?
What sort of things float?
How can we test our predictions?
How can we remember what floated and what sank?