Better Parenting

Make a Cup-and-String Phone

Test a cup-and-string phone to find what makes voices clearer.

Helps Your Child Grow



Reasoning and Problem-Solving

Making a cup-and-string telephone and comparing what happens when the string is tight or loose gives your child practice testing an idea and comparing results.



Communicating and Speaking

Describing how the sound changes with the string's tension gives your child practice turning an observation into a clear explanation.

Steps

- Make a classic cup-and-string telephone and explore how it carries sound.
- Connect two paper cups with a length of string. Have your child hold one cup to their ear while you pull the string straight and speak into the other cup.
- After listening with the string tight, let it hang loose and try again.
- Ask what changed and whether the difference might be related to the string. Invite your child to test the idea.
- Move closer and farther apart so the string alternates between loose and tight, taking turns speaking and listening.
- When your child identifies the clearest setup, invite another family member to try and let your child share the result.

Tips

- If the sound is faint, treat the result as information rather than a failure. Help your child say, "It wasn't very clear this time. What might have changed?" This invites them to notice a problem and adjust the experiment.

Observations

- ○ Loosens and tightens the string and compares how the sound changes
- ○ Tells you what they observed, such as "It only makes a sound when I pull it straight."