



# CYLINDER BLOCKS

Monteverse



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Cylinder Blocks are one of the first materials to be introduced in the Sensorial Area. While there are many different versions of this activity we will focus on the version with four blocks with ten cylinders each but it is basically the same for other versions.

This exercise consists in taking the cylinders out of the wooden blocks, placing them on a table, mix them, and then put each one back in the correct opening.

In the first set, the cylinders are all of equal height but differ in diameter.

In the second set, the cylinders are all of equal diameter but differ in height.

In the third set, the cylinders differ both in height and diameter.

In the fourth set, the cylinders differ both in height and diameter, but inversely to the third set.

## Presentation

You can present and work with the cylinder blocks on a table or a mat but we recommend using a table.

Invite your child to join you and tell them you have something to show them. Sit beside your child and place block 1 in front of them. Remember that you're going to model so how you handle this activity will have an impact on how your child will too.

Holding the knob of the thickest cylinder with the first two fingers and thumb, remove it and place it gently on the table and tell your child "this is thick". Then take the thinnest cylinder and place it next to the thickest and say "this is thin". Show the child your hand, point out your first two fingers and thumb, and show how you hold the knob and remove a cylinder and then tell them "Show me your hand. You have two fingers here (and point) and a thumb. Take this cylinder out using those two fingers and thumb." Be sure to make plenty of eye contact. Place both cylinders side by side so the contrast is even more noticeable.

Compare both cylinders and point out to your child how different they are in diameter but equal in height always emphasizing thick and thin. You can also ask them to give you the thick/thin one if you feel they're ready. Remove the remaining cylinders and place them, in the same order as they were in the block, on the table. When they're all out, look at the cylinders and show your child that the block is now empty. Carefully, select the largest or smallest and return it, quietly, to its place. Do the same for all the cylinders in order and one at a time.





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Your child may decide to join in at any moment during presentation. If they begin removing and replacing cylinders, let them work alone. If they hold the cylinders incorrectly, make mistakes or handle them a bit too loud it's important to let them carry on as they are. Also, let them replace the cylinders in any order they want.

As long as they're not behaving outside your boundaries or being too rough with the material don't interfere when your child is working.

But, if they're being too noisy, or too rough, remove the material, and, on a different day, you can take a block and sit with them. Talk very gently and softly and you can say something like "Listen. I take the cylinders out and put them on the table without making any noise. Are you listening?" and show them how to handle the cylinders quietly.

Then it's time for them to try it. "Now, you try it. I want to listen to you" and let them have a go. They love being the centre of attention while they work.

When they master the activity with one block with the cylinders taken out and replaced in order, you can repeat the steps but, remove and replace the cylinder randomly.

Present block 2, 3 and 4 in the same way. First remove and replace cylinders in order and then at random.

When they are comfortable working individually with all 4 blocks (one at a time) it's time to work with 2 blocks at the same time. Presentation is done in the same way as for when they work with only one block. First remove the cylinders in order and then at random.

Introduce a third and then a fourth block when they're ready and always in the same way.

If introduced at the right age, this exercise will be very challenging but you must not interfere. The material is self-correcting. If a mistake has been made and they place one of the cylinders by mistake in an opening that is small, they'll remove the piece and keep trying until they find the proper opening. If they place a cylinder into an opening that is too big for it, and then carry on with all the successive cylinders in openings also a little too big, the last remaining cylinder will be too large for the opening which will be the smallest one.

