**Friendly worms**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this activity is to help your child to use appropriate maths language to describe different lengths.

**Link to NZ Curriculum:**

Your child is learning to order and compare objects by length and to count using whole numbers.

**What you need:**

Play dough

**What to do:**

Have your child explore the play dough, making and talking about different shapes.

* Suggest that your child makes some pretend worms or snakes with the dough.
* Have them lay two straight worms, side by side, telling and showing you which worm is the longer, which is the shorter or saying if they are the same length.
* Now ask your child to line up more than two worms, side by side, but with each worm’s head at the edge of the table. (It is important when children are comparing lengths that all lengths have the same starting place).
* Have them use language of “longer, shorter, longest, shortest, nearly as long as, much shorter than, the same length as…”
* Together use the correct language of width to describe worms: “wider, narrower or thinner, widest, narrowest, the same width as…”
* Pose problems such as:  
  “Can you make the second shortest worm crawl away? Tell me about the worms that are left.”  
  “Make the longest worm crawl away. Now which is the longest? How do you know?”  
  “Can you make the thinnest or narrowest worm crawl away. Now tell me about the worms that are left behind…...” etc.

**What to expect your child to do:**

Correctly use the specific language associated with length and width, instead of using ‘bigger or smaller’, as this is not necessarily specific to length.

Correctly order their worms from longest to shortest and from widest to narrowest, describing their actions as they do so.