



MeasurePals

Meet the Cast

STANDARD EDITION

Spark & Anvil

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This book collects 4 chapter books from the MeasurePals cast — each character embodies a different curricular primitive; together they teach the full subject.

Methodology: distributed-narrative learning per Bruner narrative-cognition + Habgood intrinsic-integration + SAMHSA TIP 57 trauma-informed register.

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For everyone who learns by hearing a story first.

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Introduction

The MeasurePals cast was authored to embody the curriculum, not decorate around it. Each of the 4 characters you'll meet in this book teaches a specific primitive — a particular tactic, a particular technique, a particular way of seeing. Together they form an ensemble: the cast IS the curriculum.

Read in any order. Each chapter stands alone.

Each character also appears in the matching Spark & Anvil app (free, forever) where you can practice what they teach.

— *The editors at Spark & Anvil*

Inchy

Measuring by laying the same unit end to end, no gaps and no overlaps



Inchy is a small green inchworm who measures the whole world with one thing: Inchy. To find out how long a twig is, Inchy stretches out, tucks up, stretches out, tucks up — step, step, step — all the way along. "Four Inchys long!" Each step is exactly one Inchy, end to end, with no jumping ahead and no doubling back. Same-size steps, every time. That's the trick.



Two ants, Bex and Nim, are having a squabble. "MY stick is longer!" says Bex. "No, MINE is!" says Nim. They hold their sticks up in the air, far apart, and glare. But you can't tell longer from shorter when the sticks are waving around in the air. The squabble just gets louder, and both ants feel hot and cross.



Inchy loops over. "Let's find out for real," says Inchy. "But we have to be *fair*. We measure both sticks with the *same* steps — my steps. Start right at one end. No gaps between steps, no stepping over the same spot twice." Inchy lays down flat next to Bex's stick. "Watch. Step... step... step. Count with me."



Bex's stick: step, step, step, step, step — "Five Inchys!" Nim's stick: step, step, step, step, step, step — "Six Inchys!" Same steps, same way, both times. The ants go quiet. "Six is more than five," says Nim slowly. "Nim's really is a little longer," says Bex — and to Bex's own surprise, it doesn't sting. It's just... true. Now they both know, the fair way.



Bex and Nim lay their sticks down side by side and look. The measuring made the argument melt away — there was nothing left to shout about, only something they'd figured out *together*. A cool, settled calm spreads through both ants, the calm of knowing for sure. "Measure me next!" says Bex, lying down straight. And Inchy, happy as can be, starts to step: one Inchy, two Inchy, all the way along.

Tock

The clock's hands tell you when: the hour and the half-hour



Tock is a gentle tortoise, and the pattern on Tock's round shell looks exactly like a clock face — numbers around the edge, and two hands, a short one and a long one. Tock is never in a hurry, because Tock always knows *when*. "The hands point to the time," Tock says slowly. "The short hand tells the hour. When the long hand points straight up, it's o'clock. Straight down, it's half past."



Tock's friend Wex the vole is having a rough day. Wex missed snack time. Then Wex was too early for the story circle and had to wait and wait. "I never know *when* things happen," Wex groans. "It's like time is playing tricks on me." Wex feels muddled and out of step with the whole day.



"Time isn't tricking you," says Tock kindly. "You just haven't read the clock yet. Look at my shell. Snack is at three o'clock — that's when the short hand points to the three and the long hand points straight up. See? Now you can *watch* it coming, instead of being surprised." Tock turns slowly so Wex can study the hands.



Wex watches the long hand climb. "It's almost pointing up... and the short hand is near the three..." Wex's eyes go wide. "It's almost three o'clock! Snack is almost here — and I *know* it!" No surprise, no missing it. Wex can see the time coming, like watching a friend walk up the path.



All afternoon, Wex checks Tock's shell — half past three for the story, four o'clock for the pond. Knowing *when* makes the whole day feel smooth and steady, instead of jumbled. A calm, in-step feeling settles over Wex, unhurried as Tock itself. And Tock, happy to help, tucks in for a slow and peaceful rest, right on time.

Penny

Coins are worth different amounts; you count money by adding up how much each is worth



Penny is a magpie who loves shiny coins — but not just for shining. Penny knows a secret many forget: coins are not all worth the same. "A penny is one, a nickel is five, a dime is ten, a quarter is twenty-five," Penny chatters. "You don't count *how many* coins — you count *how much* they're worth. Add up the values, and you know what you've got."



Down at the seed stand, two chipmunks, Nutkin and Bram, are squabbling over a trade. "You have MORE coins than me, so give me some!" says Nutkin, who has five pennies. "But mine are worth more!" says Bram, who has two dimes. Neither one can prove it, and both are getting cross.



"Let's count by *worth*, not by number," says Penny, hopping down. "Nutkin, your five pennies — one, two, three, four, five cents. That's five cents in all. Bram, your two dimes — ten, twenty. That's twenty cents." The chipmunks blink. Bram, with only two coins, has far more money than Nutkin with five.



"So *more coins* doesn't mean *more money*," says Nutkin slowly, and to Nutkin's surprise, it's not upsetting — it's just how coins work. "A dime is worth ten of my pennies," Nutkin adds. "That's why two of them beat my five!" Now both chipmunks can see exactly what each has, fair and square. The squabble simply runs out of steam.



Penny helps them trade properly — a dime for ten pennies, even-steven — and both chipmunks trot off happy, each knowing they got a fair deal. A warm, settled, everything's-square feeling glows in them both. And Penny, delighted, lines up the coins by value in a neat shiny row, smallest worth to largest, and admires how fair the world can be when you count it right.

Stax

Stacking counts into bars makes it easy to see which has more, which has fewer, and how many more



Stax is a busy beaver who never leaves logs in a messy heap. Stax *stacks* them — all the short logs in one neat tower, all the long ones in another, all the round ones in a third. "A pile tells you nothing," Stax says, patting a tidy stack. "But line the stacks up side by side, and your eyes can see the answer: which is tallest, which is shortest, how many more."



Stax's friend Rue the rabbit dumps out a basket of buttons — red, blue, and yellow, all jumbled together. "I need to know if there are more red or more blue," Rue says, staring at the mess, "but they're all mixed up and I can't tell. It just looks like... a heap." Rue's nose wrinkles in confusion.



"Then let's stack them," says Stax. "One color per stack, side by side, each button sitting right on top of the last." Together they build three little towers: reds in a row, blues in a row, yellows in a row. Suddenly the jumble becomes a neat little chart, each color its own bar.



Rue looks — and the answer is just *there*, plain as day. "The blue tower is taller! There are more blue!" Rue counts. "Five blue, three red — two more blue than red!" What was a hopeless heap a moment ago is now something Rue can read at a glance. "I can just see it now!"



Rue makes a chart for everything after that — pinecones, acorns, pebbles — stacking each kind into its own bar. The world stops being a confusing jumble and starts making clear, tidy sense. A bright, clear-headed feeling fills Rue up, the satisfying click of confusion turning into an answer. And Stax, well pleased, squares up the little towers so every bar stands straight and true.

About Spark & Anvil

Spark & Anvil is a 501(c)(3) public charity. We make educational apps for ages 9-14 — all free, forever; no ads; no tracking; no in-app purchases. MeasurePals is one of 140+ apps in the portfolio.

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- **QuillSpell** — spelling craft through the Word Wizard cast
- **SynaForge** — sensory-affirming creative tools through Lull, Soften, and the Quiet that is Also Creating

Methodology

Distributed-narrative pedagogy per Jerome Bruner (narrative-cognition) + Sebastian Habgood (intrinsic-integration in educational games) + SAMHSA TIP 57 (trauma-informed register).

Trauma-informed-design framework per Eggleston et al. (2025) and Stoltenburg et al. (2024).

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