

It's child's play!

Learning with water

Children and babies love to play with water. We've watched them enjoying a bath. They like to splash, feel and drink the water. Some children are happy to play like this for hours. And they make a big mess!

For mothers, bathing children is just another chore that fathers hardly ever share. But when children play with water they can learn new things. And this need not take too much of your time. There are times every day for children to play with water. When they wash hands and faces, or bath, try and let them take a little longer over it.

WATER PLAY THINGS

These things are nice for children to have when playing with water:

old squeeze bottles, tea strainers, sponges, corks, plastic cups and jugs, plastic balls and bottles, empty food tins (Be sure they don't have sharp edges)

If you leave your children with these things and some water they can play by themselves. On hot days you could even give *your child a dish or bucket of water to play with outside*. But remember, babies and children can drown in a few centimetres of water. So make sure you can see the children while they play. Or get an older child to watch them.

POURING AND FILLING

Children like to pour water and fill things with water. Plastic bottles, cups, jugs and food tins can be filled and emptied. Children will pour water from one container to another. You can even make small holes in some of the containers so that your child can watch the water running out. Tea strainers and sponges are also fun.

When you get the time, have some water play with your children. If you talk about the containers your child can learn the meaning of tall, narrow, short and wide. Children can learn that containers that look different can hold the same amount of water.

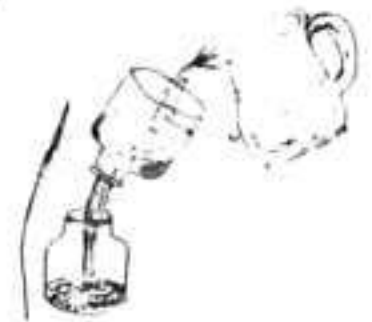
FLOATING AND SINKING

Children can learn about floating and sinking. You could give them wood, corks, sticks, leaves and closed empty bottles to float. Things like stones, full bottles and metal spoons will sink. Your child could have fun finding out which things float and which things sink.

CHANGING WATER

You can change the feel, look and taste of water. Water feels wet. We can make it feel sticky by adding honey, sugar. It can be made slippery by adding soap and oil. Water can be made colder or hotter. Add ice to make it colder, warm water to make it hotter.

Water looks clear. Get your child to try putting in things like salt, sand, sugar and oil. This way they will find out that not all things dissolve in water. Some things change the taste of water. Add sugar, lemon juice, jelly crystals or vinegar. Get your child to try all of these things out!



SPEAK thanks Sara from Northien Women's Circle, Phoenix, and Early Learning Resource Unit, Athlone for their help!