



What Makes It Rain? Science Teaches Children About The World Around Them

When you think of science, what comes to mind? Is it looking under a microscope? Mixing different liquids and finding out what happens? Perhaps it was the class where you actually got to "do" something? There are many different types of science. That's because in its simplest meaning, science is the way you study or learn (or think) about something. Science is all about studying, finding out, and making sense of the "hows", "whats", and "whys" of the world that we live in. For young children, science mixes well with their natural sense of curiosity. Young children learn through their senses - smelling, tasting, touching, hearing and seeing. Science uses all of these senses and it is also fun. Science can help children learn how the light from the sun helps flowers grow, how water becomes ice, and about other things in their environments. More Than Discovering Science has an even more important role for children than just showing them what and how things happen. Science teaches children how to learn. It uses thinking (cognitive) skills, and promotes creativity. By using the imagination, creativity, testing, experimenting, and observing, children get ideas that help them learn basic facts and rules about the world around them. Science is about experimenting - learning by trial and error, not giving up, following steps, and coming up with results. Science uses many math skills as well-guessing, measuring, comparing, organizing, and observing. Science helps children come up with their own answers (and ideas) rather than being given them. It's what true learning is all about.

Fun Science Activities For Young Children

Toddlers

Activity: Growing sponge grass

You'll need:

- Sponges (small ones - buy small ones or take one large sponge and cut it)
- Scissors
- Container - foam tray, small dish
- Water
- Grass seed
- Small spray or squirt plastic bottles
- Sunny area - window or place that gets sunlight

What you and child(ren) do:

- Take small sponge or a pieces of sponge
- Soak it in water
- Place the sponge in the container
- Sprinkle the grass seeds on the sponge
- Place it in a sunny space
- Water it a little every day
- Watch as the grass begins to grow!

Skills/Topics/What is being learned:

- The sun helps plants grow
- Water helps plants to grow
- How to observe changes every day
- How to grow things
- Words used: sun, water, sprinkle, grow, wait and observe



Preschoolers

Activity: Magical Frost

You'll need:

- A tin can or metal can (empty coffee can)
- Teaspoon
- Salt
- Ice cubes

What you and child(ren) do:

- Put ice cubes into the tin can
- Add a teaspoon of salt and stir quickly
- Watch frost form on the outside of the can
- Touch it, smell it - examine it

Skills/Topics/What is being learned:

- What happens to objects when the air around it gets very cold
- Words used: watch, frost, temperature

School Age

Activity: Sink or Float?

You'll need:

- A tub or container that holds an amount of water (that's deep enough to cover objects placed within it)
- A variety of objects to place in water. Choose large objects and small objects - e.g., plastic bottle, spoon, rock, block, wash cloth, toothbrush, ball

What you and child(ren) do:

- Fill the tub or container with water - enough to cover objects placed in the water (supervise children with water carefully)
- Before placing objects in the water - one by one, have the children guess if the object will sink to the bottom or float on the top of the water
- Write down the children's guesses
- Do this with each object you have and record the guesses and what the results were

Skills/Topics/What is being learned:

- What determines if an object will float or sink: the size, weight, material
- Questions to ask the children:
 - Why do you think some of the objects floated?
 - Why do you think some objects sank?



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